

# SCOTTISH ANTI POVERTY REVIEW



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COVID-19, POVERTY  
& BUILDING BACK BETTER







## EDITORIAL TEAM

Peter Kelly, Neil Cowan  
*The Poverty Alliance*

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The views expressed in the Scottish Anti-Poverty Review do not necessarily reflect those of The Poverty Alliance.

## ABOUT THE POVERTY ALLIANCE

The Poverty Alliance is a network of community, voluntary, statutory and other organisations whose vision is of a sustainable Scotland based on social and economic justice, with dignity for all, where poverty and inequalities are not tolerated and are challenged.

Our aim is to combat poverty by working with others to empower individuals and communities to affect change in the distribution of power and resources. To do this we:

- Work with people and communities experiencing poverty to empower them to address poverty
- Work with organisations to build a strong anti-poverty network in Scotland
- Support the development of policies which promote social justice and combat poverty
- Raise awareness about poverty and encourage debate

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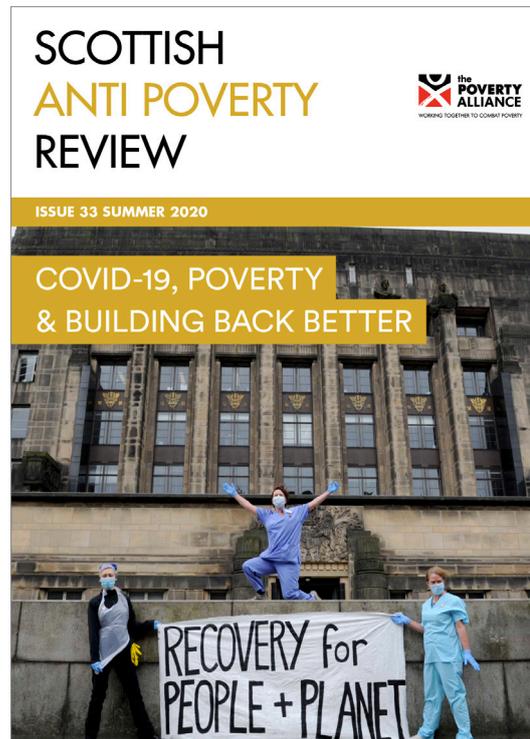
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# WELCOME

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The Poverty Alliance, Standard Buildings,  
94 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 6PH Scotland

T: 0141 353 0440 | F: 0141 353 0686,  
E: [admin@povertyalliance.org](mailto:admin@povertyalliance.org)  
[www.povertyalliance.org](http://www.povertyalliance.org)



## EDITORIAL

The experience of the coronavirus in Scotland and across the UK will change many lives and communities for years to come. Thousands have lost their lives. Those who have lost loved ones, or who have had their health significantly impacted, will live with that experience always.

Millions more have had an experience that will leave an indelible mark on their lives. That may be because of a period of unemployment, which for some people may turn into a longer spell out of the labour market, leading to them being pulled into poverty.

Tens of thousands of children have lost out on months of formal education, with parents and teachers having the task of ensuring that this does not leave a lasting impact and that, in particular, it does not widen the existing poverty-related attainment gap.

At the outset of this crisis, the Poverty Alliance highlighted that the pandemic was shining a light on the inequalities in our society. The months of lockdown have reinforced this again and again. As Jenny Galbraith from CRER highlights in this edition, black and minority ethnic people have been hit hard by the pandemic, with young black and minority ethnic people in particular having been significantly affected.

Women have also been disproportionately impacted by the economic impacts of the pandemic, as made clear by Ruth Boyle of Close the Gap's contribution to this edition. As the shape of the likely recession begins to emerge, it is sectors such as retail and hospitality, where women are already in predominantly low paid positions, where much of the impact risks being felt.

Throughout the crisis we have seen that it those already in the most precarious positions that have fared worst; young people, low paid workers, unpaid carers, older people reliant on overstretched care services.

Stark inequalities becoming more visible has been one feature of this crisis. But we should not forget about the compassion and kindness, the acts of solidarity and mutual support that have also taken place across the country.

Voluntary organisations at the national and grassroots levels have been at the heart of this compassionate response. Jamie Flaherty of SCVO highlights the range of work that has been carried out by the sector from delivering food and medicines, to supporting isolated individuals and families.

We have witnessed mutual aid groups spring up across the country, with new connections being made between groups on the ground and with people in every community stepping forward to volunteer their time to support others. This is not only something that we should welcome, but is something that we must retain and build on as we come out of this crisis.

Like many others, we have been making the call to build back better from this crisis. We are experiencing a historic disruption in our social and economic life which has been damaging and negative for many, but has also demonstrated that things can be very different.

Political decisions have meant that millions of jobs have been protected, social security levels have been increased and rights have been extended to many who were previously denied them. Had there not been significant government intervention, millions more would be out of work and plunged into poverty.

These decisions contain the promise of what could be possible. With different approaches, we can ensure that jobs are protected, that wellbeing is prioritised over profit and that the systemic inequality at the heart of our society is dismantled.

But simply exposing this inequality and poverty is not enough bring the alternatives to life. To make that happen requires those who want real change to work together like never before, to set out priorities for change and to hold those in power accountable. Now is the time for all those across civil society to come together to get to work making the transition from pandemic to social change.



## RESEARCH COMMENT

Beyond the headline: examining worker and volunteer wellbeing within community organisations delivering emergency food support in Scotland during the coronavirus crisis

*In his regular column, Professor John McKendrick – Co-Director of the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit, based at Glasgow Caledonian University – examines the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the wellbeing of workers and volunteers working on the frontline in supporting people experiencing food insecurity.*



The Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit recently published a report for the Poverty and Inequality Commission, which conveyed the experiences of 211 community organisations involved in providing emergency food support across Scotland, during the coronavirus crisis (McKendrick and Campbell, 2020). With responses from each of Scotland's 32 local authority areas and sufficient responses from urban and rural Scotland, the report was able to provide a sense of how well Scotland as a whole is meeting the challenges of feeding its most vulnerable citizens during the coronavirus crisis. The Commission responded to the report by making three recommendations to the Scottish Government (Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2020).

The core focus of the report was an analysis of how things are, how things had changed over the month prior to the report's launch, and how things were expected to change over the coming month. The issues examined for each of the three time-frames were: (i) number of people in need of emergency food; (ii) amount of funding; (iii) access to funding; (iv) number of workers/volunteers; (v) wellbeing of workers/volunteers; (vi) cost of buying food; (vii) supply of food; (viii) co-ordination by local authority; (ix) advice and support provided by local authority; and (x) access to personal and protective equipment.

On the whole, the findings were positive. The vast majority of community organisations reported that (i) over the last month, the situation had either improved or stayed the same for the majority of issues; (ii) there were no problems with the majority of issues at present; and

(iii) over the next month, they anticipated no change for the majority of issues. It was also clear that there was a sense of achievement at what organisations were delivering to their communities in this time of crisis.

However, some stress points were identified and some concerns were beginning to emerge. In the report, these are described in full, leading to 12 recommendations for action. Of note were concerns that: (i) organisations were not able to meet the needs of everyone who needed food locally; (ii) funding problems were beginning to emerge; and (iii) organisations were so focused on managing their local situation, that they did not have a sense of whether or not things were working for Scotland as a whole. Here, we share the findings for another of these emerging concerns; an issue that tends to lie 'beyond the headline' and is not always acknowledged – the wellbeing of workers/volunteers who are delivering the emergency food support.

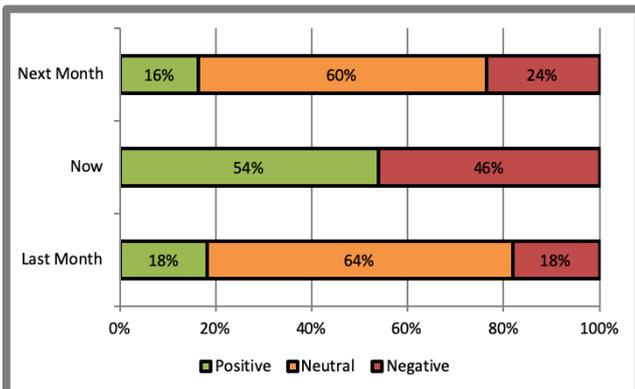
Figure 1 gives a simple summary of worker/wellbeing that seems to portray a positive situation. The majority of organisations are not currently concerned with worker/volunteer wellbeing (54%) and the majority report improvements or no change for both the last month (82% report no change in wellbeing or improvements to wellbeing) and for the month ahead (76% expect improvements in wellbeing no change in wellbeing). On the other hand, approaching one-half of organisations are now reporting concerns for worker/volunteer wellbeing (46%).





# RESEARCH COMMENT Cont'd

**Figure 1: Worker/volunteer well-being: concerns of community organisations providing emergency food in Scotland, mid-May 2020**



Cases: 167 (past), 181 (current), 163 (future)  
 Source: McKendrick and Campbell (2020)

When we build an integrated view of worker wellbeing – linking past, present and expected results – a clearer picture emerges (Table 1). There is no universal experience among community organisations – thirteen different combinations of past, current and future evaluations of worker/volunteer wellbeing are reported. Approaching one-half of organisations report a profile that is positive in character (49.4% of organisations), with the most common experience reported being ‘a lack of concern over wellbeing at present, having experienced no change

over the last month and expecting no further change over the next month’ (32.9% of organisations).

On the other hand, approaching one in five organisations are already concerned with worker wellbeing and expect things to worsen over the next month (18.9%) and one in four organisations are either ‘expecting a turn for the worse, although not being concerned at present’, or are ‘already concerned and expecting no improvement over the next month’ (24%).

Although it was noted by some organisations that volunteering was “helping keep mental health good among volunteers” and that “many of our volunteers would like to do more”, the reality of volunteering in highly stressful situations was beginning to take its toll on many others:

- “COVID-19 is having such an effect on everyone, our staff are being pushed to the limits physically making up & distributing aid as well as supporting peoples mental health & hearing some of the struggles others are facing it is important to support our staff & de-brief.”
- “Last week was the funeral of a worker /delivery driver of another food service in our city. Therefore as someone who allocates drivers to deliveries, you feel responsible sending people to deliver food parcels at homes that may have the virus. We talked it through with the volunteers about best practice on the day and all were fine with that, but in life there are no 100% guarantees.”

**Table 1: An Integrated Evaluation of Worker/volunteer well-being: concerns of community organisations providing emergency food in Scotland, mid-May 2020**

| Overview          | Last month | Last week (Now) | Next month   | %    | %    |
|-------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|------|------|
| Strongly positive | Improved   | Not concerned   | Will improve | 5.7  | 8.9  |
|                   | Stay same  | Not concerned   | Will improve | 3.2  |      |
| Positive          | Improved   | Not concerned   | Stay same    | 7.6  | 40.5 |
|                   | Stay same  | Not concerned   | Stay same    | 32.9 |      |
| Neutral           | Improved   | Concerned       | Will improve | 2.5  | 7.5  |
|                   | Stay same  | Concerned       | Will improve | 4.4  |      |
|                   | Worsened   | Concerned       | Will improve | 0.6  |      |
| Negative          | Improved   | Not concerned   | Will worsen  | 0.6  | 24.0 |
|                   | Improved   | Concerned       | Stay same    | 2.5  |      |
|                   | Stay same  | Not concerned   | Will worsen  | 1.9  |      |
|                   | Stay same  | Concerned       | Stay same    | 15.2 |      |
|                   | Worsened   | Not concerned   | Will worsen  | 1.9  |      |
|                   | Worsened   | Concerned       | Stay same    | 1.9  |      |
| Strongly negative | Improved   | Concerned       | Will worsen  | 0.6  | 18.9 |
|                   | Stay same  | Concerned       | Will worsen  | 6.3  |      |
|                   | Worsened   | Concerned       | Will worsen  | 12.0 |      |

Cases: 158 organisations  
 Source: McKendrick and Campbell (2020)



## RESEARCH COMMENT Cont'd

- *“Some volunteers are more anxious even those working in administrative roles with no close contact with other Volunteers or clients. Increased level of enquiries and generally more stressful time.”*
- *“Our community volunteers have taken on responsibilities - they have cared - worried -stressed - cried - shared and coped. We are then bombarded for good news stories, statistics requests, heartfelt but ultimately useless support calls - from our local authority.”*
- *“Staff also delivering hot soup at a safe distance can hear some tragic stories and this can be really hard. One staff member purchased clothes and food for a new born baby that had only 3 baby grows due to her husband not having recourse to public funds.”*
- *“We are working non-stop and this is taking it’s toll on the employees both mentally and physically. Not only is the delivery and organisation physically exhausting - we are often dealing with upsetting stories from members of our community and so emotional and mental well-being is often compromised.”*
- *“Often the public are the ones who are making this more stressful for us. (Not adhering to social distancing, open hours for donations). We are often having to ask people to come back during open hours for donations to keep our volunteers and service users safe and we have received verbal abuse, aggressive behaviour, ignoring our requests, demanding to come into our food bank without PPE, overstepping boundaries. The public donors are not making the stressful situation any easier and are often causing more stress for us. This has put a huge strain on our mental health. We are trying to find ways to alleviate these issues but the current situation we all find ourselves in does not allow the space to think or find time to make these easier. The work we do is also very physical and we are all exhausted by carrying heavy loads every day. We are also becoming the only face/person someone speaks to and we are often given so much information about a service users state of mental and physical health that we find it difficult to find ways to not worry about these service users. The death of a service user by COVID-19 hit us especially hard.”*

The experiences shared for the SPIRU report convey the intensity and breadth of challenges that many

volunteers/workers delivering emergency food are now facing. We must acknowledge that that stresses on wellbeing is now emerging as an issue, and make this an immediate priority to address.

The prospect ahead may be one of demand for emergency food remaining high, with a diminished staff resource to deliver this service (as those workers on furlough who are volunteering return to the labour market as lockdown eases) – this can only increase the demands on an already stressed workforce. The ability to continue delivering emergency food in Scotland needs workers/volunteers in good health. Worker/volunteer wellbeing is a problem that we now need to headline.

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## TRADE UNION COMMENT

### Does Scotland really think key workers deserve pay cuts?



*The role of key workers in sustaining our society and communities has never been clearer than throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet too many key workers across Scotland continue to find themselves struggling to get by whilst facing pay freezes and cuts. Roz Foyer, General Secretary of the Scottish Trade Union Congress, here makes the case for righting the wrongs faced by so many across Scotland, by fighting for fair pay for key workers.*

One of the ironies of Scotland's unjust society is that essential workers can barely afford essentials. The people working to keep Scotland going are among those who share least in its wealth.

Scottish society is good at creating a unified and caring atmosphere. But would the people who came to the doorstep of big, comfy, spacious houses to clap for carers be happy paying a bit more in tax so that key workers were paid a fair amount? Is the Scottish Government decent enough to consider it? The STUC thinks the time has come to find out.

The trade union movement is challenging the people that control Scotland's purse-strings to honour the people they so eagerly name heroes – the key workers – with a pay rise of £2 an hour.

If you are a key worker yourself, you will know what difference that would make.

Almost a quarter of working age individuals are in key worker roles. These include refuse collectors, nurses, call centre workers, postal workers, transport staff, and many others. Women are twice as likely as men to be key workers, and tend to be paid less. The gap in earning between key and non-key occupations has almost doubled following a decade of cuts to public service.

#### **A third of key workers earn single figure sums each hour**

Most of the people producing, packing, distributing and stacking food earn single figures per hour. 71% earn £10 an hour or less, while Morrisons CEO David Potts and Tesco's CEO Dave Lewis earned £4.6 million and £4.9 million respectively.

In social care, 43% of workers earn less than the real Living Wage of £9.30 an hour. Civil service pay has fallen by more than 20% in the last ten years, and benefits advisers and tax collectors are paid less than £10 an hour. In total, a third of key workers earn £10 an hour or less. That is what employers can get away with, and so that is what they will earn until government is made to intervene. The poverty lobby can support unionised workers' efforts that will force government to act.

The Scottish Government likes to talk about its commitment to raising wages in care, but when groups of care workers approach employers to ask for pay rises, the response is often that the government has not provided the money. It is common for workers to have been earning £10 an hour since 2016. That is a real-terms pay cut. What kind of society rewards heroes with pay cuts?

Supporting workers to take control of their work and pay is always the priority of the trade union movement, and there are certain moments when it becomes more possible. Whatever key workers think of the heroes rhetoric – and I know many who hate it – there is potential for leveraging pay.

#### **But at what cost?**

This is the question of the reactionary. But it has an answer. The cost would be around £2 billion a year. That is just over 1% of the wealth that workers produce in Scotland each year. That could cover a pay rise of £2 an hour for the quarter of all workers who are in key roles. Not all that cost would fall on the Scottish and UK Governments, since many key workers are in the private sector.



It would bring significant economic benefits, and in this respect it is an investment. While the government would sow more money into the economy, it would also reap higher revenues. The IPPR thinktank suggest that more than 40% of the cost of Scottish public sector pay increases would be offset in tax revenues.

Local economies would also bear more fruit if more money was put directly into the purses of workers that live in those communities. Bankers and executives stuff their money into stocks and savings funds. Health workers, carers, supermarket workers and cleaners who can barely afford essentials finally have some money for the goods, gifts and groceries that they cannot afford on £9.50 an hour.

While key roles have been filled, many sectors have been shut down and workers furloughed. As I write, many workers will be hearing news that they are to be laid off. Many of them will have a partner or other family who is in a key role, who will have to win the bread for the family.

When a body is injured, blood needs to flow and when parts of the economy are withering, money needs to circulate. Paying workers more gives the economy what it needs to recover better and to allow it to rebuild from the bottom up.

### **Solidarity is not applause**

There are different kinds of collective action. Some show appreciation and issue praise; others express anger and power. The kind of collective impulse that brought people to clap on a Thursday, while welcome, now needs to be followed up by real action to support those who have supported us throughout this crisis. As the lockdown ends, the time has come for concrete actions.

Perhaps it's time for those who have clapped for carers to ask them what they want in return. Perhaps they do not want to hear the answer, that workers want pay that reflects the kind of value they bring society, rather than the kind of value that government and private companies give them. For be in no doubt, in families across the country workers would like a pay rise. Even children know that £2 an hour would make life better after the misery of lockdown.

In my job, I speak to cabinet secretaries every week. But there is a limit to how much government listens to unions, and that limit is set by the strength of workers. When workers begin talking, building networks and sharing plans and stories of what a difference more pay makes, and when workers join together with each other and organise in a thousand different ways, that is when power emerges.

Coronavirus may be keeping a lot of us physically isolated, but we can use apps and technology to get discussion going. Chats with friends, family, and above all to fellow workers are the seed of solidarity.

There is an argument for paying key workers that is about properly funding public services, about the value we place on their work, about righting past wrongs, and creating a better society. These all make sense. Let us make these arguments, and do it in solidarity with every worker demanding more for themselves and their families.

The appreciation for workers has not won anyone better pay or conditions. Maybe anger will. The virus has stirred anger about the ironies and injustices that are under the surface of Scotland's caring outward image. The trade union movement is ready to turn that anger into hope and that hope into real action.



## THIRD SECTOR COMMENT

### Never more needed: The Scottish voluntary sector's response to the coronavirus pandemic

*One of the defining aspects of the response to the pandemic has been the way in which voluntary and community organisations across the country mobilised to meet the urgent and evolving needs of people who were – and continue to be – struggling to get by. Jamie Flaherty, Public Affairs Officer at SCVO, here reflects on the voluntary sector's response to the crisis, as well as the need for the sector to play a critical role in the recovery process.*

As we move out lockdown and back to 'normal', many are now talking about the renewal and recovery phase of the coronavirus pandemic. However, for voluntary organisations who are continuing to support people from low income backgrounds and beyond, the recovery phase seems far away as they continue to deal with the immediate crisis response, despite the country's lifting of coronavirus related restrictions.

Since the pandemic began, over a third of Scotland's voluntary organisations reported an increase in demand for their support over the last few months. Many of these organisations, which help low income families, predict a post-lockdown surge in demand for services, which comes at a time when they also estimate a 30% drop in income, with 70% of organisations of the belief that there will be cuts to services and budgets once we move out of the midst of the pandemic. Many organisations are struggling already or have ceased trading altogether. These are organisations that provide essential food, housing, health and wellbeing support to those from low income backgrounds.

The contribution of Scotland's thriving and diverse voluntary sector in tackling coronavirus cannot be underestimated. The sector has mobilised and adapted to the challenging circumstances posed by social distancing, self-isolation and lockdown with speed and flexibility. People on low incomes have been hit hardest by the pandemic and the sector has acted as a crucial lifeline for many. Prior to the pandemic, access to food was already significant issue for families across the country, and as lockdown took hold this issue turned into a crisis for many. The early days of lockdown led to the panic buying and hoarding of food which had massive repercussions for low income households. Despite the mantra of 'we're all in this together', coronavirus is not an equal opportunities virus. The most vulnerable in Scottish society were and continue to remain disproportionately impacted by coronavirus.

The voluntary sector has played a massive role in ensuring those on low incomes have been able to access



food throughout the pandemic. Organisations such as FareShare delivered 45.9 tonnes of food, the equivalent of over 109,000 meals to charities and community organisations in June alone, which were then passed on to those that needed them the most. FareShare, as part of the Scottish Government Fair Food Fund, received over £2 million to purchase food stocks due to the increased demand as a result of coronavirus. FareShare's work is just one example in a long list of organisations who have played a key role in guiding Scotland through these troubling times.

SCVO has also contributed to the crisis response through our digital inclusion work. The pandemic highlighted the digital disadvantages that low income households experience. People within these households are often unable to access the benefits of being online because of the affordability of kit, data-poverty and connectivity, or they simply do not have the confidence and skills required to be able to use technology effectively.

SCVO has worked throughout the pandemic to make sure that more people and communities throughout the country are able to get online and access vital support. However, we are aware that many people are still left behind in terms of access to digital technology and therefore further investment is essential in order to achieve a fair economic recovery and avoid inequalities worsening.



## THIRD SECTOR COMMENT Cont'd

The voluntary sector in Scotland has long played a crucial role in supporting those on low incomes. As the extent of coronavirus on the country and the sector began to reveal itself, the importance of this support was highlighted everywhere – on television, in Westminster and Holyrood, across radio airwaves, right down to local Facebook community groups. The pandemic has seen more and more people rely on the support provided by the voluntary sector at a time when donations to these same organisations are dwindling and future funding is uncertain. SCVO's analysis of sector finances pre-pandemic paints a picture of a complex patchwork funding landscape of fundraising, trading, contracts, grants and reserves, all of which have been impacted by coronavirus. Those delivering crucial support to people living in poverty in Scotland are likely to be severely impacted in one way or another.

The coronavirus pandemic was unexpected and blindsided not only the Scottish voluntary sector but the entire world. The pandemic brought with it new challenges and obstacles for voluntary organisations throughout the country, particularly in relation to funding. However, it is important to remember that prior to coronavirus many organisations were already struggling. Research suggests that voluntary organisations will experience a considerable drop in income this year and half of all charities report that they may run out of cash within six months. Both UK and devolved governments have stepped in to fill short-term gaps through initiatives such as the Job Retention Scheme, Third Sector Resilience Fund and others.

Independent funders have also come together to address gaps and harness their existing relationships to provide vital support to the sector. However, support packages are focussed on the immediate needs, acting as crisis response. As we move into the recovery phase, we need to make sure that the efforts of voluntary organisations throughout the pandemic are not forgotten.

Organisations in Scotland need to be provided with the support they require to ensure that they are there for people when the next crisis comes around and the sector is once again required to step up to the plate.



The contribution of voluntary organisations in alleviating poverty in Scotland caused by coronavirus has not gone unnoticed by those at the highest level. But now is the time to ensure that the sector stays engaged and represented in the expected rebuilding process. Scottish voluntary organisations have never been more needed. Those organisations who are supporting low income households at ground level know the people they work with well and understand their needs. The sector has learned from the initial response to the pandemic what works, what doesn't and what needs to be improved. Voluntary organisations provide a reliable source of knowledge and wisdom which can be drawn from to help ensure that future public services aimed at supporting those from low income backgrounds are efficient and adequate.

Scotland's voluntary sector has played a key role in supporting low income families and households during the coronavirus pandemic and will undoubtedly be required to address future coronavirus related inequalities. The sector has worked tremendously well alongside public service at both local and national levels, enjoying new found flexibility and innovation to meet the needs of the people the sector is there to help. However, for this to continue, the voluntary sector needs to play a central role in the recovery and renewal process in order to ensure that it is successful for everyone regardless of their bac



## Covid-19 and a human-rights based recovery

*The pandemic has placed many fundamental human rights – like the right to health and the right to food – at risk for many people. Here, Mhairi Snowden of Human Rights Consortium Scotland, details the human rights crisis that Covid-19 has created and makes the case for a human rights-based recovery.*

Covid-19 is unprecedented. We know this all too well. It has had unprecedented impacts on all of us, unprecedented impacts on our way of life and livelihoods, unprecedented impacts on families, communities and health.

But what is not unprecedented is which people and communities are dealing with the brunt of the impact of Covid-19 - they are also the same people and communities that, over many years, have faced the brunt of austerity, inequality and discrimination. These same people and communities are those who have faced infringements of their basic human rights on a daily basis through the effects of living in poverty and marginalisation. The human right to food, to highest attainable level of health, to education, to adequate, accessible and affordable housing, to social security - all of these are fundamental human rights which have been at risk for too many in Scotland for some time, and have been placed at greater risk for more people during Covid-19.

- During this time the Human Rights Consortium Scotland has worked with its members to hear about and raise concerns about the impacts of Covid-19 on people, the rights-holders.
- Some of the concerns have been about people being forced to use foodbanks, at some distance from their homes and with the indignity that comes with it.
- Disabled people who need care and support to participate, to be included, to get out of bed in the mornings have suddenly had this support changed or removed. Others who depend on respite or health services finding that these have been stopped without warning and without any form of replacement.
- Services being reprioritised and changed without any obvious explanation or impact assessment.



- People's ability to maintain contact with their elderly family members entirely cut off in seemingly disproportionate response, whilst for others in similar situations, innovative ways have been found to maintain the right to family life.
- People whose jobs are precarious at the best of times have been flung into unemployment and increasing poverty. All the problems of our welfare support system once again damaging the lives of those that really need it. When so many more people suddenly depend on our social security safety net, it is sadly the case that our net is not good enough.
- Dignity being low down the list of considerations for uprooting those in the asylum system from flats and putting them into hotels, removing their weekly allowance, forcing them to live too close to others.
- People detained in Dungavel facing increased risk to life and health due to living in close quarters to others. They are not there to serve time for a crime - they are there for administrative purposes and while that administration cannot take place, they should quite simply not be there.
- And meantime, the impact of Covid-19 on top of the overcrowding crisis in Scotland's prisons has led to a very serious situation. The Scottish Human Rights Commission warns that the current conditions being experienced by some people in Scottish prisons could amount to inhuman and degrading treatment, in breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Prisoners kept in their cells for 24 hours, limited or very little contact with lawyers or family members. How we treat people in prison says something very fundamental about a country's regard for people's dignity and human rights.



For all of these reasons and more, the UN Human Rights Commissioner has said that Covid-19 is a public health crisis that has become a human rights crisis.

**To respond to this human rights crisis then, Scotland needs, and could significantly benefit, from a human rights-based response.**

We must bear in mind that our international human rights are not just principles, good practice, common sense or compassionate. They are not solely a new framing or lens, a new way of talking about old problems.

Our international human rights are obligations that our government has signed up to, and the government's fulfilling of these commitments is reviewed regularly by international bodies. Some of these international human rights are directly enforceable in our UK courts and all public bodies have a duty to adhere to them – even in times of crises like now. Scottish Ministers have specifically pledged to fulfil international obligations in their ministerial Code.

These international obligations are also increasingly being seen in our national policy. The National Performance Framework includes that human rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled. They are peppered throughout different pieces of law, such as the right to social security in our new Social Security Act. And human rights understanding is strongly reflected in the Scottish Government's framework for decision-making around Covid-19.

**But what would a human rights-based recovery from COVID-19 look like?**

Human rights is fundamentally about power, and fundamental to shifting the balance of power is the question of who makes the decisions. Those greatest hit by Covid-19 should be making decisions about how we recover. This means that our policy-making tables should be full of disabled people, black and ethnic minority people, people living in poverty and others. There should be reinstated and strengthened participation of individuals in decisions about their own lives.



We need to empower people through putting more of our international human rights directly into Scots law. The UNCRC bill is due to be introduced to Parliament soon, and a bill to incorporate our other international human rights is being developed. This will include many of the human rights currently very much at risk - the right to food, to adequate housing, to education, to social security, to mention a few. We need to make all of our human rights binding, not guiding.

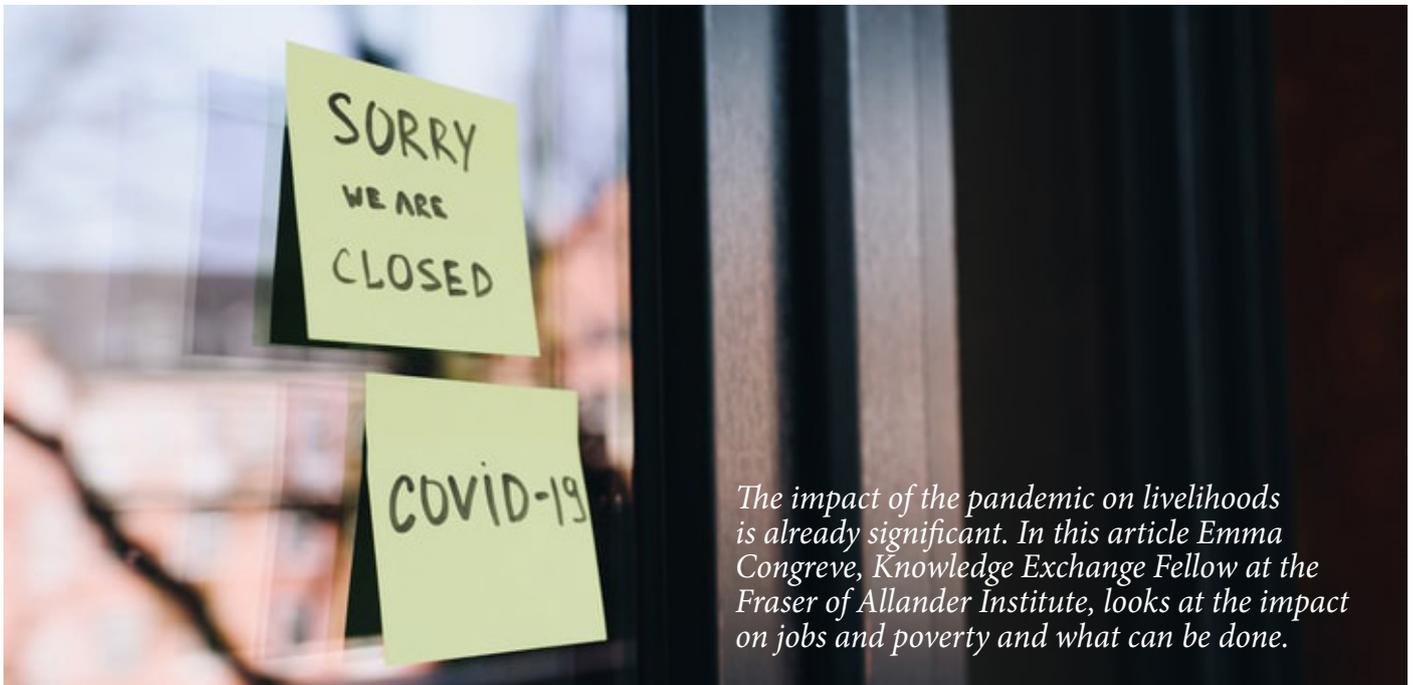
In the midst of many competing and serious priorities in crisis recovery, those of people whose basic rights have been most impacted need to be prioritised. The government need to assess the impact on different groups, avoiding assumptions, and always embedding gender and other equalities into their understanding and planning around the problems and the solutions.

And all of this decision-making needs to be characterised by transparency. We have called for Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments to be undertaken and published for all COVID-19 decision-making. These Assessments should show the participation, the evidence, the considerations and the priorities decided.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Extreme Poverty, Philip Alston, said, 'poverty is a political choice.' This is no less true now than then. We can choose to come out of this crisis with new commitment and progress towards ending poverty in Scotland.



## CoVid -19: The economy, jobs and poverty



*The impact of the pandemic on livelihoods is already significant. In this article Emma Congreve, Knowledge Exchange Fellow at the Fraser of Allander Institute, looks at the impact on jobs and poverty and what can be done.*

The CoVid-19 epidemic will have a serious and long-term impact on many aspects of the world that we live in. In mid-March, governments across the UK imposed rules, using their public health powers, to press pause on much of the economy. This unprecedented move was widely supported in efforts to stop the spread of CoVid-19 but there is no doubt that these steps, and indeed to fear of the virus itself, has had a monumental impact on jobs and pushed many people into financially uncertain waters.

Now we are starting to reopen parts of the economy but this won't be easy. Due to the inherent messiness of supply chains (if one-part collapses, the rest will suffer), uncertainty over possible resurgence of the virus, and the cautiousness felt by many here and around the world of venturing back out into public spaces, the impact of this crisis will be broad and long-lasting. We're also still little the wiser on when a vaccine may become available, meaning that many restrictions are likely to persist for some time yet.

### Impact on Jobs

There is no question that conditions in the labour market are tough, and there is little sign of this improving in the near future.

Decline in demand for goods and services, as well as huge uncertainty relating to when things will be able to return to normal means that businesses are looking for cost savings to secure their future, and one of the biggest costs they face are labour costs. Shedding staff is a situation most businesses seek to avoid to protect the welfare of their workers as well as for reasons of productivity; long term, if they do survive, losing staff means the loss of skills and expertise built up over time and costs in re-hiring.

The loss of a job can, of course, be catastrophic for individuals and households particularly when it is more difficult to find another job quickly – which is the situation many newly unemployed people will be facing right now.

These factors explained the rationale for the UK Government's Job Retention Scheme which has clearly been pivotal in keeping millions of people on payroll, but there are fears that it is being withdrawn too early, as well as questions over whether too many people were left to fall between the cracks - It has helped some, but not all and we have already seen staggering increases in the number of people seeking support from Universal Credit due to loss of income.



And as the job retention scheme is eased back and then subsequently comes to an end, we can only expect further job losses to come.

### Impact on poverty

Significant loss of earnings will mean that more people will find themselves in situations where they cannot cover bills or necessary expenses such as food. Whilst Universal Credit provides some financial support, for many it will be too little to cover their outgoings and for others, issues such as the five-week wait for money to arrive (even with advances) will put a large dent in household finances that could lead people towards unsecured debt.

The crisis is affecting many people. But for those that are already struggling to get by, its impact will be that much greater than those who are able to draw upon savings or reduce outgoings. It is also true that jobs that can be done from home, and hence have been able to continue in some form through the crisis, tend to be better paid jobs.

For example, we looked in detail at the workers in the tourism sector, which is one of the most directly affected by restrictions. Pre-crisis, they were on one of the lowest paid sectors with an average take-home income that was around 15% lower than the Scottish average, and a poverty rate of 28% which is much higher than the Scottish average of 19%. For children with parents who work in the sector, the poverty rate was 41% compared to the Scottish average of 24%.

As sectors, like tourism, are starting to reopen, albeit slowly and at reduced capacity, not all workers will find it easy to return to work, in particular, those with a health condition who know they are more at risk from serious illness if they were to catch CoVid-19, and secondly, those who have caring responsibilities, including for children.

Until care services, schools, nurseries, wrap-around and informal support are back to normal, working outside the home will not be possible to the same extent for many who previously did so. With schools due to reopen in August, this will start to free up parents' time, and



more formal care settings may be able to follow suit, but informal care, utilising grandparents for example, may be too risky for many families to contemplate.

Given that mothers tend to take on more of the childcare responsibilities, there is a clear risk that this means a further reduction in hours worked and earnings for women relative to men. For single parent households, the vast majority of which are headed by a women, these issues will be even more acute.

Hence, we do need to be acutely aware of workers who are left behind in this reopening stage. As already discussed above, the likelihood of businesses being able to return to full capacity any time soon is unlikely and for those that need to delay their return to work, they may be more likely to find that there isn't work left for them. If those with health conditions and single parents bear the brunt of the job losses, given their already often precarious financial situations, this would spell disaster for them and their families and force many into poverty.

### Role of society in protecting incomes

The response of the UK Government to the pandemic with the introduction of the job retention scheme, along with income support for self employed, has shown that the state can step in to replace income at a relatively high level (80% of salary) for a period of time. Of course, many have not found themselves eligible for these schemes or, as discussed earlier, have become unemployed and instead have only received support via Universal Credit. This has opened up debate about



## CoVid -19: The economy, jobs and poverty

fairness and questions over what the right level of support is. Is it right that in 'normal times' we expect people to survive on the relatively low level of income offered by Universal Credit along with its conditionality and sanctions (which were paused but now have been reinstated)?

### What other options are there?

A reformed Universal Credit, with conditionality permanently removed could edge us towards a Universal Basic Income – a guaranteed level of support with no strings attached. Whether or not it should be genuinely universal is a key question that many have a different answer to.

What we do know is that the more targeted a scheme the more it can pay to each household and the more cost effective it will be as a poverty reducing tool in the here and now.

Those who support a Universal Basic Income often point to other advantages – for example giving people the time and money to take time out of the labour market to seek better job opportunities or to retrain. Depending on the level Universal Credit is set at, this could indeed be a positive benefit of such a scheme. There are other ways, again perhaps more cost effective to do this. For example, many of our European neighbours have something similar to an unemployment insurance scheme, including Denmark and Germany. Contributions from workers, businesses and the government are likely to be required to give people the replacement income to make such decisions risk free enough, but could lead to a modified and more productive labour market that gives workers more choice.

So far, it feels more like the UK Government is hoping for a return to normal, rather than a re-writing of the rule book on the long-term role of the state, employee and employer. That is not to say schemes such as the UK Government's Kickstart scheme to subsidise jobs for young people won't be effective for those who benefit - although the civil service itself has questioned the cost effectiveness of one of the Chancellor's other schemes, the Job Retention Bonus of £1000 for every furloughed

worker who is still employed as of 31st January 2021. But many have wondered whether the total ambition of the government is significant enough for all who now find themselves in deep water (or soon will) due to the impact of CoVid-19. Scottish Government investment in this area, for example with the new investment in the Fair Start Scotland employability scheme, again is helpful and there may be more to come, but so far it is hard to accept that what has been announced will be enough to stave off the crisis that will envelope so many, and destroy financial security for families probably for years to come.

Part of this is pragmatism on behalf of governments – it does take time and resources to implement 'big ideas' that could radically transform society before you even consider the politics of such decisions. However, investment in the social security system to help it provide a genuine, decent, income floor for all who need it, does not appear to be on the horizon despite its obvious potential to help keep people's head above water who, for whatever reason, aren't able to access jobs despite the new support. Responsibilities lie with both the UK and Scottish Governments and we have previously written about the options open on social security north of the border. These options may not be new and exciting, but they have a real chance of giving people a level of stability whilst we wait for this crisis to settle.

Poverty leads to poorer health outcomes and indeed part of the reason attributed to higher Covid-19 deaths in some parts of the country is due to the poor socio-economic circumstances that have led to worse underlying health, and greater susceptibility to serious illness as a result of catching the virus. Given the efforts that have gone into preventing the spread of the virus to limit deaths, it seems perverse that we may in fact be sowing the seeds of future health crises by failing to ensure that poverty doesn't take its grip on great swathes of people who, as a result of Covid-19, have found themselves struggling. Yes, job schemes will help many, but it is very unlikely that these new schemes will be a guarantee of financial security for all. There are other levers that could be pulled to do that, and given the damage that poverty can do, it might be better to pull them sooner rather than later.



## Women, work and COVID-19: The stark implications for women's poverty

*The pandemic has shone a light on the structural inequalities in our economy and society, including the entrenched gender inequalities in our labour market. Here Ruth Boyle, Policy and Parliamentary Officer at Close the Gap, explores the immediate and potential long-term impacts of Covid-19 on women's participation in the labour market and on women's poverty.*

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, poverty in Scotland was gendered. Women were more likely to be in poverty; more likely to experience in-work poverty; and were more likely to experience persistent poverty than men.

Women's experience of poverty is directly linked to their experience of the labour market. That one of the key consequences of COVID-19 is labour market disruption and an expected 'jobs recession' is therefore particularly problematic for women's poverty, as women's pre-existing inequality in the labour market puts them at particular risk of unemployment, having their hours cut and being furloughed.

Close the Gap's recently published research, *Disproportionate Disruption*, highlights that women's employment will be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 job disruption. The research highlights that women account for the majority of workers in sectors designated by the Scottish Government as being at 'high exposure' to labour market disruption. The high-risk sectors where women are concentrated are low-paid service sectors, such as retail and hospitality, putting low-paid women at particular risk of job disruption and even greater risk of poverty.

Women are already four percentage points more likely to have lost their jobs than men, and women in low-paid personal care services and cleaning roles are most likely to have been made redundant. As service-sector businesses are more likely to be impacted by social distancing measures, the majority female workforces in these sectors are at greater risk of redundancy over the course of this crisis.

Job losses are only expected to rise. Changes to the operation of the Job Retention scheme will certainly bring a further wave of redundancies from businesses that are struggling to stay afloat, with low-paid women at particular risk of losing their job. As the UK Government prepares to wind down the furlough scheme, a survey from the British Chambers of



Commerce found that almost a third of companies plan to cut jobs in the next three months. The Treasury's independent economics forecaster concluded that at least 10%, and as much as a 20%, of the 9.4m jobs furloughed on the scheme will be made redundant.

Women who were already struggling are now under enormous financial pressure, being pushed into further and deeper poverty. Ultimately, without specific interventions to promote women's equality and a gendered response to the crisis, COVID-19 will exacerbate the gendered nature of poverty in Scotland.

In line with the multiple labour market barriers experienced by different groups of women, coronavirus leaves some groups of women at even greater risk of poverty. For example, women in the gig economy, 75% of whom earn less than the taxable threshold, do not have access to either of the Government financial support schemes. BME women are concentrated in low-paid service sectors and are more likely to be insecure work, putting them at greater risk of redundancy, and the loss of hours and earnings. Migrant women with no recourse to public funds who have been made redundant, or had their hours cut, face destitution because they are not eligible for most benefits.

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In the immediate sense, women's earnings have been impacted by their increased likelihood of working in a sector that has been shut down. Young women and women on zero-hour contracts are over-represented in these sectors. One-third of lone parents also work in shutdown sectors which is particularly concerning for child poverty rates as lone parents, 91% of whom are women, are already more likely to be living in poverty.

Many of the shutdown sectors where women are concentrated, such as retail and hospitality, are notoriously low paid and characterised by job insecurity. For example, four in ten of those working in retail and wholesale are paid less than the real Living Wage and 80% of people working in hospitality reported that they were already struggling with their finances before going into lockdown. Typical pay for workers in shutdown sectors is less than half that of workers in jobs that are able to be done from home.



As these service sectors are less likely to ‘bounce back’ following the end of the crisis, as a result of changing consumer preferences and spending power, the impacts for women working in these sectors are unlikely to be fleeting.

Women in these low-paid, high-risk sectors are already more likely to be experiencing in-work poverty and are therefore less likely to have savings to fall back on. Women account for two-thirds of workers earning less than the living wage, and receiving only 80% of their usual salary through the Job Retention Scheme could push these women into poverty. For women who have had their hours reduced, the loss of earnings will have a profound impact on their financial security.

Many women may find that their furloughed salary means that their earnings are below the Universal Credit threshold and others will be forced into accessing social security as a result of being made redundant. The current crisis has highlighted the failings of Universal Credit in particularly stark terms. Women require a lifeline, but the design of social security does not meet their needs, and traps women in poverty.

The majority of the key worker jobs identified by the Scottish and UK Governments are undervalued female-dominated occupations including nurses, carers, early learning and childcare workers and supermarket workers. These roles are predominantly done by women, and for this reason many of these jobs are systematically undervalued in the labour market. Many of these keyworker jobs, such as those in adult social care, childcare and retail, are characterised by low pay, and poor terms and conditions. Research by the Women’s Budget Group’s found that women account for 98% of the workers in high exposure jobs earning ‘poverty wages’. The undervaluation of “women’s work” results in the low pay associated with those jobs and sectors and has lifelong impacts for women such as having less access to resources and assets, including occupational pensions, and a higher risk of in-work poverty.

The delay in the delivery of the increased funded entitlement for childcare also raises concerns around women’s poverty in the longer term. With an assessment of readiness planned for December, it is expected

that the new entitlement will not be in place until the 2021/22 school year. Indeed, only 8 of Scotland’s 32 local authorities have committed to providing the 1140 hours by August. The lack of flexible and affordable childcare is a key barrier for women entering the labour market or increasing their hours. 25% of parents living in absolute poverty in Scotland have given up work and a third have turned down a job because of the high cost of childcare. Delays in the provision of the funded entitlement could trap women in low-paid part-time work, or prevent women from re-entering the labour market, adding to a growing child poverty crisis.

School and nursery closures, and increased caring responsibilities in the home have drastically affected women’s ability to do paid work. Existing gendered patterns of care are being replicated during lockdown, and in many cases magnified. Women across the UK are typically providing at least 50% more childcare, as well as spending around 10% to 30% more time than men home-schooling their children.

Women in casualised and precarious work face difficulties reconciling variable hours with caring responsibilities, and low-paid women are less likely to be able to work from home in order to care for children during the crisis. These issues, coupled by low awareness among employers of the furlough provision for employees with caring responsibilities, may lead to women having to take unpaid leave, or having to quit their job, in order to care, further jeopardising their earnings. In other cases, women have utilised their full annual leave entitlement to do childcare, impacting their ability to balance work and caring responsibilities in the longer-term.

The transformation of Scotland’s economic landscape as a result of COVID-19 will have far-reaching implications for women in the labour market. One of the key consequences will be a rising tide of poverty for women, and the key concern is how to respond to this trend. Transformational and ambitious policy responses are essential.

To this end, Close the Gap and Engender have published Gender and Economic Recovery which details the principles for a gender-sensitive economic recovery.



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The principles describe features of an economy that works for women as well as men and develop Scotland's existing commitment to inclusive growth. The nine principles range from specifying that gender-sensitive inclusive growth is about the pattern of growth and not its rate, to stipulating that Scotland's economy should be governed by gender-balanced, gender-competent leaders, making decisions based on intersectional gender-sensitive sex disaggregated data. Another principle stresses that "women's work" in care, cleaning, catering, retail, and clerical roles have for too long been undervalued, underpaid, and under-protected. The COVID-19 crisis has illuminated the critical role "women's work" plays in Scotland's economy, and addressing undervaluation should be key priority of economic recovery.

COVID-19 has made it even more pivotal that the Scottish Government prioritise action to tackle women's in-work poverty when trying to meet their child poverty targets. As Close the Gap highlighted in a previous edition of the Anti-poverty Review, despite the established link between women's poverty and child poverty, much analysis and action on child poverty largely ignores the fact it is increasingly impossible to tackle child poverty without tackling women's inequality in the labour market.

Austerity in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis had massive implications for women's equality, disproportionately hitting women's incomes and destroying the social security safety net. Further and deeper austerity is an entirely inappropriate response to this crisis, having potentially devastating consequences for women's poverty and child poverty. The findings of our Disproportionate Disruption report highlight the importance of integrating gender equality into labour market and economic recovery policymaking. Addressing the inequalities women face at work must be a core aim of economic recovery measures.

The UK and Scottish Governments must not enact a recovery that facilitates a return to the status quo, cementing women's poverty in the process. Economic recovery needs to focus on rebuilding and transforming the economy to further gender equality and tackle pre-existing inequalities. The idea of building back better must mean building a labour market and social security system that works for women.



## Covid-19, race, poverty and inequality

*Dr Jennifer Galbraith, Policy and Research Officer at the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER), here analyses the disproportionate economic, social and health impact of the pandemic on Black and minority ethnic communities, with a call for the UK and Scottish governments to do much more to acknowledge and address their needs.*



At the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, there was a surge of public and political sentiment on how we are all in this together. Even the Queen on addressing the nation in a speech invoking wartime spirit and camaraderie finished with: “we should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again”.<sup>1</sup>

However, due to the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on particular groups in society, some will have more to “endure” than others and their “better days” will return later.

At CRER we have been particularly interested in the ramifications Covid-19 will have on Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. In our recent blog we noted that health conditions associated with vulnerability to Covid-19 are prevalent in BME groups in Scotland.<sup>2</sup> For instance, the Scottish Diabetes Survey (2018)<sup>3</sup> reported that rates of diabetes were higher in people of South Asian backgrounds than white ethnic groups, and it has been highlighted that South Asians have a higher risk of developing diabetes.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, research conducted in 2017 for the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH)<sup>5</sup> stated Pakistani men and women have higher rates of heart disease than the white Scottish population, and the NHS<sup>6</sup> has noted that sickle cell disease is particularly common among those of African and Caribbean ethnicity.

Using data from England and Wales, a report from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) suggested that BME people could be vulnerable to Covid-19 due to the prevalence of these groups working in key worker professions.<sup>7</sup>

For example, a person of working age who is of African ethnicity is 50% more likely than a white British person of working age to be a key worker and almost three times as likely to work in health and social care. It was also highlighted that men of Indian ethnicity and African ethnicity were 150% and 310% more likely to work in health or social care in comparison to white British men. Additionally, while those of Indian ethnicity comprise of 3.2% of the working age population in England and Wales, they make up 14% of doctors.

These have just been some of the hypotheses for the emerging evidence that Covid-19 disproportionately impacts BME people. In April 2020 the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre (ICNARC) documented that hospital patients from Black, African and Caribbean ethnicity in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were more likely to be critically ill with Covid-19 than people from other ethnicities.<sup>8</sup> The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) followed this up in May 2020 and highlighted the rate of deaths per-capita from Covid-19 in England and Wales were highest amongst the Caribbean population.<sup>9</sup> More recently, Public Health England (PHE) found that out of the confirmed cases people of Bangladeshi ethnicity were twice as likely to die from Covid-19 than white British people.<sup>10</sup>

These reports gained national headlines, and we have been involved in calls for the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland to disclose the data they collect on COVID-19 and ethnicity to examine if there were similar issues here. Yet despite these calls and multiple parliamentary questions, it was almost two months into this crisis that the first statistics on COVID-19 and ethnicity in Scotland were released.



## Covid-19, race, poverty and inequality

According to analysis from the National Records of Scotland (NRS) people from Black, Asian or minority ethnic groups accounted for 23 (1%) deaths involving Covid-19 up to April 26th 2020.<sup>11</sup> However, the ethnicity of the deceased was not provided for 203 deaths (9%). On July 8th 2020, utilising linkages with 2011 Census data to improve on the missing data, NRS reported deaths amongst people of South Asian ethnicity were almost two times more likely to involve Covid-19 than in the white ethnic group.<sup>12</sup> Public Health Scotland (PHS), after previously suggesting the proportion of BME hospital patients who were seriously ill with Covid-19 was not higher than the general Scottish population,<sup>13</sup> have now reported there is emerging evidence of increased risk of serious illness from Covid-19 for those of South Asian ethnicity.<sup>14</sup>

However, it is important to note that it was not possible to draw reliable conclusions for other ethnic groups in both NRS and PHS most recent reports due to limited data.

It seems that the data in Scotland is beginning to confirm the wider UK picture in that BME people do seem more vulnerable to Covid-19. It is also clear that they will be particularly vulnerable to the longer-term financial ramifications that this crisis brings.

Before coronavirus, BME people already faced significant disadvantage and inequality within Scottish society. For example, according to the Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2016-19 report BME people were more likely to be in poverty after housing costs.<sup>15</sup> Using five-year averages between 2014 and 2019, 38% of those classed as Mixed, Black or Black British and Other and 39% of those classed as Asian or Asian British were in relative poverty after housing costs compared to 18% of white – British and 25% of white – Other. This means that BME people were twice as likely to be in relative poverty than white British people. Additionally, using data from the Annual Population Survey, in Scotland between January 2019 and December 2019 59.3% of BME people aged 16-64 were in employment in comparison to 75.7% of people categorised as white and 6.9% of BME people over the age of 16 were unemployed in comparison to 3.3% of people categorised as white.<sup>16</sup>

Since the crisis started, the disadvantages that BME people experience have only been, and continue to be, exacerbated. For instance, young BME people can face significant financial disadvantage from Covid-19 as, in a report from the Resolution Foundation, it was documented that the proportion of 18-24 year olds and 25-34 year olds who had been furloughed from their main job was greater than the average across all ages.<sup>17</sup> According to the 2011 Census data, the majority of the BME population in Scotland was under 34, in comparison with over 35 for those categorised as white.<sup>18</sup> This means there is a greater chance that BME young people will be disproportionately impacted by the economic impact of Covid-19. Social Security Scotland have also highlighted that BME applicants for welfare have lower success rates than white applicants.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that BME people could find it more difficult to access government support during this crisis.

In examining the available evidence, it is clear that BME people will have an increased vulnerability to poverty due to the fallout from this crisis. Yet to begin to try and mitigate these impacts, we need to know the scale of the issues. We cannot do this in Scotland without reliable and robust statistics on ethnicity. While the NRS reports on deaths by ethnicity are a start, they are clear that there are many limitations to the analysis based on the data available. It is also telling that they have been placed on the webpage for general ethnicity data and not the main webpage for Covid-19 related data.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, the reports from PHS have many data limitations meaning the results also need to be treated with caution. Yet without measures across the Scottish health sector we will be unable to gain an accurate picture on how Covid-19 is impacting BME people in Scotland.

To fully measure and understand the ramifications of this crisis in the years to come, we need more reliable ethnicity data across the board in all main government publications and surveys. For instance, the experience of relative poverty by ethnicity as highlighted in the Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2016-19 report was presented in 5-year averages due to small sample sizes.



## Covid-19, race, poverty and inequality

This means we cannot examine BME people's experiences of relative poverty on a single year basis and so it will be harder to discern the impact of COVID-19 on these statistics.

However, inquiries into the impact of Covid-19 have already begun. At the Scottish level, the Equalities and Human Rights Committee agreed to launch an inquiry into Covid-19 with the remit being to identify what groups are disproportionately impacted.<sup>21</sup> At the UK level, the UK Parliament's Women and Equalities Committee have launched an inquiry into the impact Covid-19 will have on people with protected characteristics.<sup>22</sup> CRER is also involved in an expert group established by the Scottish Government<sup>23</sup> to

examine the impact Covid-19 is having on BME people and Glasgow City Council's Social Recovery Task Force to look at how they deal with the after effects of Covid-19.

These are only some of the initiatives that have been launched in relation to Covid-19, yet it is not clear to what extent issues of racial equality will be taken on board with this work. Without appropriate representation of BME people in the inquiries along with reliable data that can document their experiences, we cannot improve the situation for BME people in Scotland and ensure that their "better days will return". We need the governments of the UK to acknowledge the challenges and needs of BME communities in light of Covid-19 and act swiftly to address them.

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# MEMBERSHIP: JOIN US!

The Poverty Alliance is a national anti-poverty development agency for Scotland, which seeks to combat poverty through collaborative action, bringing together workers and activists drawn from the public sector, voluntary organisations, community groups and other agencies.

The Alliance's wide range of activities provide many opportunities for members to exchange information and expertise, which benefits the anti-poverty movement.

The benefits of membership include regular mailings, Scottish Anti-Poverty Review, opportunities to become involved in working groups and access to a wide range of organisations and activists who have the potential to influence the direction of anti-poverty policy in the future.

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name and designation of contact person: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name and address of organisation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP FEES:

FULL MEMBERSHIP: OPEN TO CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS: INCOME LESS THAN £50K: FREE | £50,000-£75,000: £50 | £75,000-£175,000: £75 | £175,000-£500,000: £100 | MORE THAN £500,000: £200

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP: OPEN TO INDIVIDUALS, VOLUNTARY AND STATUTORY BODIES, AND PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANISATIONS\*: UNWAGED INDIVIDUALS: FREE | INDIVIDUALS: £25 | VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS: £25 | STATUTORY BODIES: £300

\*PLEASE CONTACT THE POVERTY ALLIANCE FOR DETAILS

I/We wish to apply for \*Ordinary/Associate Membership for the year: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Please delete as appropriate. NB Membership of The Poverty Alliance runs from 1st April to 31st March. Applications for new membership received after April 1st are charged on a pro rata basis.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send the completed application form to the address below - thank you.