



Fairer Futures

**Perth & Kinross
Fairness Commission**

- 1. Chair's Introduction by Councillor Archie MacLellan**
- 2. Perth and Kinross Fairness Commission**
 - About the Commission*
 - About this report*
 - Context*
- 3. Recommendations**
- 4. Fairer Perth and Kinross**
- 5. A Strong Start**
- 6. Fairer Working Lives**
- 7. Thriving Third Age**
- 8. Better Connected (Services, Transport, Digital Lives)**
- 9. Next Steps**

Appendices

- 1. Helpful Terms*
- 2. Participating Organisations*
- 3. Commissioners*
- 4. References / Sources*

1. Chair's Introduction by Councillor Archie MacLellan

We started this work because we want to learn more about what life is really like in Perth and Kinross. We recognise that many people in the area are experiencing the consequences of poverty and inequality - this needs to change. We invited a group of independent Commissioners to take forward this work because whilst we already know some of the complex and enduring challenges people are facing, we wanted to encourage an objective view, which looked at Perth and Kinross through a different lens. I would like to thank my fellow Commissioners, who so willingly offered their time, expertise and insights into what else needs to happen in Perth and Kinross, to ensure fairer and brighter futures for all.

Perth and Kinross is at the heart of Scotland, geographically and historically, and has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. The Community Planning Partnership have aspirations of a bright future, building on the Tay City Deal ambitions, and a flourishing creative sector reinforced by the bid to become UK City of Culture in 2021. But below the surface, the people who live here face distinct challenges which may seem surprising to those on the outside, looking in. Within this area of outstanding natural beauty, the difference between the most affluent communities and those living in adversity is stark.

Throughout the course of our work we have recognised that poverty and inequality are underpinned by structural factors in the labour market, housing market, social security system, public services, and through how individuals and families are supported in our communities. We were also struck by the fact that we consistently heard that simple things can make a big difference, such as how we relate to each other as human beings; seeing the person and not the issue; seeking to understand and support, rather than to judge; stopping 'doing to people', and instead working *with* them to find the right solution; listening to and acting on what is most important to people; and creating the conditions within our area, where people are able to pursue and achieve their own dreams and aspirations.

The Commission's report is not an end; rather it is a beginning. This report marks the start of the next stage of our journey, with a challenge. A challenge to everyone in Perth and Kinross to step up their awareness and understanding of poverty and inequality, learn more about how it affects individuals and communities, strike up conversations with colleagues and friends, and be inspired to act.

This is an opportunity for us to think again. Let's use it to encourage different voices, new ideas, and new solutions; let's use it to look beyond our own lives, and create a shared vision for the society we want to live in.

Together we can build fairer, brighter futures in Perth and Kinross.

Councillor Archie MacLellan

Chair

Perth and Kinross Fairness Commission

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2. Perth and Kinross Fairness Commission

About the Commission

We are an independent Commission of 11 individuals, with a broad range of experience, expertise and influence at both national and local levels. We were appointed by Perth & Kinross Community Planning Partnership (CPP) specifically to learn more about how people living in Perth and Kinross experience poverty and inequality in their everyday lives, gain an insight into what gets in the way of people reaching their full potential, and consequently set out recommendations to influence positive change.

To understand the strengths and challenges within the area, we reviewed existing data, plans and strategies and looked to the work of other Fairness Commissions. Levels of poverty and inequality have been well researched and documented over the years, and it is not our intention to restate the existing evidence within this report, or to repeat the issues highlighted in the numerous strategies developed to address them. Instead we have drawn on this body of work to help interpret and identify priority areas.

The *most* important part of our work in Perth and Kinross, was the time spent listening to local residents, groups, professionals, organisations and businesses. We began this process in July 2016, and invited as many people as possible to share their personal and professional experiences and observations, and crucially, their perspectives on what needs to be different. (A list of participating organisations is provided at Appendix 2, and you can find out who we are at Appendix 3).

We are grateful to everyone who offered their time, guidance and energy to our process of enquiry – people were very open, and their contribution has shaped how we have approached the publication of our findings and recommendations.

About this report

This report contains a summary of what we heard from people during the course of our work, and an interpretation of what people told us would make the biggest difference. From this information we have devised recommendations which we believe will create a specific and collective focus on tackling the causes and consequences of poverty and inequality within the area.

Importantly, whilst this report has been produced at the request of the Perth and Kinross CPP, building Fairer Futures for all will require a community-wide approach. The biggest impact will be achieved where informed citizens take action at every level: as individuals, as community groups, within organisations, and as leaders in different arenas. Our intention is to spark a renewed and re-energised focus across the wider community, of the continued need to tackle poverty and the stubborn inequalities which exist, to transform people's lives and ensure a bright future for all in Perth and Kinross.

We hope that this report informs, raises awareness of different realities and captures people's interest, well beyond the Community Planning Partnership – because with shared awareness comes the possibility of great change.

A Different Lens

Perth and Kinross is home to around 150,000 residents, distributed across the 2,000 square miles of the fifth largest local authority area in Scotland. The area is one of the fastest growing authorities in Scotland, adding an additional 6,000 households by 2021. Much of this growth will be focused in and around the City of Perth, from in-migration from Scotland and the UK, and also in the older person population more widely. It is an area with an abundance of potential, hard-working people and strong communities.

Perth and Kinross's characteristics are diverse and surprising. While the headline data shouts healthy, prosperous and well educated, a closer examination highlights a more complex story of place, with hidden crises such as low wages and social isolation, affecting many. Whilst it is clear that there are many examples of good work ongoing across the area, more can always be done to enable people and communities to flourish. You will find examples of excellent practice throughout this document and we recognise the expertise, commitment and sense of community which already exists across Perth and Kinross.

In the process of exploring what people think is fair and unfair within Perth and Kinross, a number of themes emerged, around which this report is structured. These are as follows:

- Fairer Perth and Kinross: people, place, equality
- A Strong Start: an equal footing for life – chances, choices, confidence
- Fairer Working Lives: opportunity, security, respect
- A Thriving Third Age: living well, belonging, contributing
- Better Connected: services, transport, digital lives

Within these themes, we identify what we heard would make a difference and throughout every theme, a stronger emphasis on prevention to address the issues raised will be key to progress. The aim is to encourage a generation of solutions which are built around the people and communities of Perth and Kinross; we want to see a greater focus on collaboration, with organisations making more effective connections for the people they serve; we want to see a more preventative and proactive approach to delivering better outcomes for those experiencing challenges in their lives.

3. Recommendations

We invite the CPP as a collective, to take the lead on this next stage, by further exploring our recommendations, and developing a prioritised and shared set of actions, with defined outcomes. We recognise that different parts of this report will be meaningful in different ways to different people, and that the detail of the actions will need to be determined and prioritised within the context of specific organisations, services and customer groups.

The Commission's recommendations are high level, and at this stage offer a predominant focus on action to be driven by the CPP, to address the issues which people told us would make the biggest difference. The purpose is to set direction for the next stage in the journey to create a fairer, more equal society in Perth and Kinross. The subsequent, thematic, sections outline specific challenges and opportunities that these high level strategic developments will help to address. Partners may also wish to consider focussed action on highlighted specific thematic issues. Our headline recommendations are as follows:

1. We invite each CPP organisation to identify a named, accountable, lead person to drive forward the relevant actions, and for this lead officer group to report on progress at an organisational and partnership level. We recommend that processes are developed to ensure that actions are co-designed alongside people, places and communities experiencing poverty.
2. A planned programme of awareness raising about the causes and consequences of poverty and inequalities in Perth and Kinross, is commenced as soon as possible for the wider community and public, private and third sector organisations. The purpose of this is to encourage an open and continuous campaign for Fairness, which encourages and invites commitment and contribution from individuals, groups, communities, and public, private and third sectors. This could take many forms, such as pledges or commitments, depending on who is involved.

3. Later in 2017, Scottish Government will introduce a new duty on public authorities to ensure that organisations take account of socio-economic disadvantage when making decisions. Within this context, Perth & Kinross CPP as a collective, should proactively ensure that what is offered effectively addresses the challenges people face, as told to us over the course of our work. This is a significant 'ask' which will require action at strategic, corporate, professional and operational levels. With an explicit focus on promoting fairness and equality, this may include:
 - Processes which ensure resources (financial and human) are allocated according to need and achieve an effective focus on prevention, and promotion of fairness.
 - Organisational and professional development which supports increased knowledge of poverty and inequalities and understanding of their impact, a focus on people skills and managing relationships, and the evolution of empowering environments which encourage people to influence improvements and / or innovations in working practices.
 - Reviewing strategies, policies and procedures – checking purpose, language, tone, accessibility and effectiveness in relation to preventing poverty / inequality, and reflecting the culture we want to promote to respectfully support those experiencing it to move forward with dignity.
 - Connectedness at organisational / service / practitioner levels: creating knowledge and application of pathways of support which are right for individuals and families, so that it is easier for people to access the help they need, when they need it.
4. The CPP should lead the way in identifying the most powerful interventions they can take locally, (now and in the future), to make significant progress towards achieving the targets set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill, and so improve the outcomes of the 5,000 children living in poverty in Perth and Kinross.
5. Efficient and equitable access to support for individuals and families is a priority. With a focus on prevention, the CPP should evaluate and develop new approaches which change the way services are accessed and delivered at a local levels, based on thorough understanding of what's important to a community (and who belongs to it), and the challenges they face. This can be achieved by

identifying needs and assets within defined localities and working to better co-ordinate and align the services, supports and amenities within that area.

6. An effective local infrastructure offers vital lifelines for people who have limited financial or social resources. Public bodies, communities and the third sector should reinforce a prioritised focus on working with communities to co-produce different ways of working, which surfaces and builds on community assets, and supports people to develop and sustain solutions which are right for the people involved.
7. The role of the community and third sector is vital, and CPP organisations should prioritise support for third sector activities which are focused on delivering the recommendations of this report, in relation to tackling inequality and promoting equality of opportunity.
8. The Tay Cities deal aspires to create a wider fair work region. The CPP should move quickly to work with businesses and employers to define and promote what Fair Work means in Perth and Kinross. It should set its own priorities, commitments and measures of progress which specifically takes account of in work poverty and low pay. Within this context, the Commission noted only 11 of 17 community planning partners are accredited living wage employers. All partners should demonstrate collective leadership and commit or aspire (and have a plan in place) to pay the living wage and / or publish their own feasible commitments to fair work.
9. Inclusive economic growth creates opportunity for all segments of the population and distributes the benefits of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society. The CPP should maximise the opportunities of inclusive economic growth initiatives by applying a high weighting to social value criteria for all procurement and contracting arrangements for goods and services.

4. A Fairer Perth and Kinross

Key Facts

- 1 in 7 Perth and Kinross households are classified as being amongst the most socially and financially challenged in the UK. These are found over the whole area.
- A third of the population live in Perth City; the remainder are based in rural areas where additional challenges around lower wage jobs, accessibility to services, housing, transport and fuel become more pressing.
- Although the 2011 census reported about 7% of the population from ethnic minorities, more recently around 1 in 7 births have been to non-UK born mothers.
- 11,500 people (8% of the population) are limited by long term health problem or disability.

What We Heard

Perth and Kinross is generally thought to be an affluent area, and described as such by many statistics which can hide the detail. However, on closer examination, there are more indicators of deprivation than these statistics may suggest. The area is characterised by much greater levels of rurality than much of central Scotland and faces distinct challenges as a result. Particularly within these types of settings, people may find it more difficult to access services (due to availability, digital problems, transport and distance), and in some cases may even be unaware of what they are entitled to, or what is available to them. We learned that loneliness and isolation is a recurring theme for people, whether based on geography, and / or circumstance.

“Just having someone to speak to once or twice a week can make all the difference”

One of the big challenges people living in poverty face is the stigma that surrounds it. Though people don't choose to be in hardship, and a series of life events may have led them there, many still fear that they will be judged as a person, parent or potential employee for finding themselves in difficult circumstances. Stigma associated with the word 'poverty' might even get in the way of people seeking help.

There is evidence that people from more affluent backgrounds find it difficult to relate to the problems faced by people from less affluent backgrounds, particularly if they have no lived experience of poverty. Without that understanding, people are less likely to be supportive of actions specifically targeted at tackling poverty and inequality.

"We should be judging ourselves as a society on how we treat people who are marginalised – it reflects more on society than on those individuals"

The Commissioners heard that when dealing with poverty, the issues that often get spoken about are employment, education, health etc., but people avoid discussing the issue of money, which is central to how we live, and often determines how effectively people can access opportunities, and resource their lives and aspirations. It is important to note that even if you have a job, you can be struggling financially and it takes time to get out of poverty; having a job doesn't automatically provide financial stability. In these situations, getting the right advice and having the opportunity to develop skills to understand and manage finances are crucial in negotiating a path out of poverty. Associated with this is the need for a fair income and an affordable cost of living, and we heard of the challenges of being able to make ends meet within the context of monthly benefits payments. There was a view that a shorter payment period (such as fortnightly) would cause less stress for those experiencing this situation.

We heard that 2,155 people had accessed the Perth and Kinross Foodbank between April and September 2016 (a 47% increase compared to the same period in 2015). Whilst donations for the foodbank at a local supermarket are the second highest in the UK (illustrating the generosity of local people), it is important to build approaches which promote dignified access to food, such as the Broke not Broken project, which offers a wide range of support, including food provision.

'Rather than dealing with the consequences of poverty and inequality, we need to deal with the causes and nurture people'.

Good quality, affordable housing, relevant to an individual or family's needs has a huge impact on people's quality of life. The rising costs of private sector housing, together with challenges around low wages (including zero hours contracts) and high living costs, put additional pressure on families and individuals. New local social housing developments and an increase in council housing stock aim to alleviate this,

however it should be noted that in the last recorded year to September 2016, there were 900 homeless applications, and within this, 350 families with children presenting as homeless. This has to be balanced against the number of social houses that become available each year and against other tenant issues associated with private landlords, such as overcrowding.

It is clear that there is a vibrant third sector, with close to 1,500 charitable organisations registered in the area, working with communities on a range of themes, from volunteering and befriending projects, to social enterprise. We heard that longer term funding would reinforce the important role the voluntary sector plays within the community of Perth and Kinross, and create stability and sustainability for those accessing the services on offer, and as a means of recruiting and retaining staff within the sector. Within this context, we heard that there can be duplication of effort (and funding applications) across the various organisations, and that a clearer, more strategic view of local voluntary sector activity (and the links to national programmes) would be helpful. Volunteering doesn't just happen, and good volunteer management is an essential investment so that action can be extended to intergenerational activity involving schools, colleges, housing providers and workplaces. Good management also reduces the risk of volunteer overload. The people of Perth and Kinross continue to benefit from philanthropy, in particular through the Gannochy Trust, which was founded in 1937. An example of this is the Living Communities fund which is available to primary and secondary schools in Perth and Kinross to support projects which address inequality, are intergenerational, and strengthen school / community links.

Perth and Kinross has a richly diverse community. Our Gypsy Traveller population is the highest in Scotland, and we have recently welcomed a number of Syrian families into the area. Over the last ten years, 4,000 new residents from Europe and further afield have made their home in the area. In-migration continues to be an important and valuable part of growing the economy and population. Therefore it is essential that services recognise the distinct challenges, cultural issues and inequalities people face, and seek to support them. This may be about of translation, accessibility of services or just ensuring Perth and Kinross continues to be a welcoming place to call home. We heard from people in our ethnic minority communities that they have difficulty in accessing important services if they don't speak English as their first language.

“Inequality breeds other problems and that we need to work with everybody locally to try to bridge this gap”

There is a long-stay mental health hospital within the City of Perth, and we know that those leaving hospital can find life challenging in terms of maintaining their mental health, wellbeing and being able to access opportunities which support social connectedness and self-sufficiency.

Perth and Kinross has a Prison and an Open Prison, and where people choose to stay in the area after their release, they can experience a whole range of challenges as they start to rebuild their life within an area which may be new to them.

The Commission heard about the importance of building more resilient communities, who are able to alleviate some of the effects of poverty and inequalities, in ways that are relevant to local circumstances. People want to feel that they are contributing to society, and be included and valued at every life stage, and this is key to ensuring Perth and Kinross is a fairer place to live.

We note the bid to become UK City of Culture in 2021, and fully recognise the social value and impact of participation in cultural activities for individuals and communities. We also heard of the importance of physical activity in supporting emotional, physical and mental health, and contributing to people’s sense of belonging and wellbeing – it is important that everyone who wishes to can access and participate in cultural, sporting and leisure activities.

What people told us would make a difference

- Really understanding the different challenges people face at a local level, and their aspirations, is key to addressing them. Public, private and third sector organisations should work more closely with local communities and encourage / support jointly created solutions and opportunities.
- Developing greater understanding of the potential assets and resources existing within communities and localities, and place a greater focus on strengthening community development and resilience, particularly in areas where there is greatest need.
- Organisations developing their workforce to ensure that all service delivery is respectful, person-centred and preserves the dignity of the individual. This is likely to require a shift in attitudes and behaviours, a check on the purpose and

language of policies and procedures, and the development of engagement and learning programmes which create a greater focus on equalities and cultural awareness

- All staff and volunteers who work with the public, need to be aware of how important money is and the capacity it has to change lives for the better or worse. Training and development around money matters should be prioritised, and given to all appropriate staff, not just the most obvious ones.
- All services, across all sectors, should provide translation and interpretation support to ensure ethnic minority communities can access the services they need, and that English language classes are widely promoted and available where required.

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5. A Strong Start

Key Facts

- Around 1 in 5 children are estimated to live in poverty – around 5,000 in total.
- Around 1 in 5 children do not meet key development milestones at their 27-30 month health review and before they start primary school.
- The poverty-related attainment gap widens as children progress through school.
- Participation in extra-curricular activities is lower for children from more disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The vast majority (95%) of young people leave school to go to a positive initial destination. Around 1,000 under 25s are reliant on benefits, where 100 claim job-seekers allowance.

What we heard

Poverty is unfair. It impacts on children, families and communities, and feeds the conditions which lead to deprivation and disadvantage, increasing a person's vulnerability to circumstances which reduce their ability to make the best of the life chances available. Poverty is not inevitable, but being born and raised in poverty can have a big impact on a child's future; potentially affecting their perspective on life, chances of gaining qualifications, building positive relationships, remaining in good health, or gaining employment in later life. In Perth and Kinross, one in five children live in poverty after housing costs are considered (c. 5,000). DWP figures point to around 1,000 children living in workless households in Perth & Kinross. This means that a large majority of children currently living in poverty belong to families where at least one adult works.

A 2007 OECD report indicated that parents' socio-economic background had a greater influence on children's attainment and achievement than the school they went to. Children's learning begins at home, whether this is about learning to read and count, or learning about behaviour and relationships. Family life plays a major role in developing a child's happiness and sense of belonging, which then helps shape their future.

The Commission received information about the Evidence2Success work which had gathered information on wellbeing from children aged 9 – 15 years and parents of children aged 8 and under. The CPP used this information to identify and agree five priorities to improve key areas of wellbeing from pre-birth to the teenage years. To make a difference in these areas activity has been developed to increase the support available to parents; early evidence of the impact of these interventions is showing that they are enabling the parents involved to help their children to have better outcomes in life and reduce the inequalities that they might otherwise experience.

“We need to support parents to make a better life for themselves and their families”

We heard that in some cases many different services were engaged with families for various reasons, for example housing, education and social work. This left families often feeling confused, and not knowing where to turn. As with other areas covered in this report, people said that having one key point of contact would make a difference. Someone who would look at the family as a whole and offer them support and guidance, and work with them to enable them to overcome whatever difficulties they face.

Giving children a strong start in life requires different professionals working together and understanding the particular issues for families experiencing poverty. Because of this, it is vital that schools continue to work in partnership with a range of organisations and services to ensure that strongest of starts can be achieved.

We learned that children living in the less deprived areas in Perth and Kinross are more likely to achieve all pre-school developmental milestones. These milestones include things like a child’s ability to communicate, their social and emotional development, behaviour and attention span. There is evidence that if children reach these early milestones, then they are more likely to have positive outcomes as they progress throughout their school life and beyond. In Perth and Kinross there are around 1 in 5 young people (c. 350 of a P1 year group), mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are not yet reaching these milestones as they start school.

Closing the poverty-related attainment gap is a challenge for all schools across Perth and Kinross, not just those serving more deprived catchment areas usually found in urban areas, since other indicators of disadvantage – free meal entitlement,

additional support needs and being care-experienced – need to sit alongside area-based measures. While school-based influences matter at each stage (leadership, quality of teaching), early support to families from birth onwards is the key ingredient.

It is clear that a broad range and level of learning opportunities are vital to support individual learning journeys during the school years, however some expressed the view that there can be lack of flexibility in the choice of vocational and academic subjects and courses available.

We also heard that equity of access to opportunities for all children, across the area, is very important to all parents and carers, and that the cost of the school day, in terms of school meals, uniforms, equipment, trips, sports clubs or other fun activities can be difficult to manage. These experiences are all important parts of a child's development, which allow them to learn, develop social skills and pursue interests and hobbies out with school. Holiday periods also create additional financial strain, in terms of childcare costs, and the costs associated with keeping children fed and occupied during the weeks away from school.

The transition from school to either further education or work was another recurring theme. For young people, leaving school is a big step, and continually improving the supports and range of opportunities available to ensure young people are helped to be ready for the world of work or further or higher education, is increasingly important. We heard that access to work experience for school age students is of variable quality and availability, often depending on the nature of networks available to individual schools – we felt that an equitable offer should be made to all students to ensure fair access to opportunity.

“We need to ensure that we are preparing our young people for life beyond school. Young people need to be resilient, and have the confidence to thrive – not just survive.”

A key group identified by the Commission is Looked After Children. It is well evidenced that the outcomes for children and young people who are or have been Looked After are not as good as their peers. We heard that they are more likely to be excluded from school, less likely to attain literacy / numeracy standards, less likely to enter positive destinations after leaving school and more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system. In 2016, there were around 290 looked after children of various ages between 0-17 (1% of the population). There will be a larger number who have experienced care previously in their lives. The Commission

believe that their needs could be better met, and particular attention paid to transitions at every stage in their lives.

What people told us would make a difference

- Improve life chances for children and young people, by focusing on strengthening and enabling families, through early engagement, support and guidance. This includes a stronger focus on preparing children to be ready for school and developing more effective relationships between schools and other statutory and voluntary agencies, to ensure that services are more holistic and aligned, easier to access, and suited to individual circumstances.
- Develop a clearer picture of the costs associated with participation in school (in every sense) – understand the impact this has on children and families – work to create a more equitable approach which seeks to be more inclusive and supportive for those most in need.
- Every child should leave the education system with an agreed level of experiences, opportunities, skills and qualifications, which will offer them a positive step into the world of work or further education, and ready for the next stage of their life. In particular schools should continue to work in partnership with Perth College UHI, Developing Young Workforce Regional Board and other partners to maximise the opportunities afforded by curriculum flexibility to meet the needs of all young people.
- Maximise the opportunity that corporate parenting responsibilities offers the partnership by guaranteeing a positive destination for all care experienced children and young people at 16 and 18. This might mean higher education or university for some and as a minimum an appropriate apprenticeship within the range of CPP organisations.

6. Fairer Working Lives

Key Facts

- Over recent years, jobs in the area have paid almost a tenth less than the Scottish average.
- Around 1 in 10 working-age households rely on some form of benefit.
- Fewer people in Perth and Kinross have no qualifications and more are degree-qualified compared to the rest of Scotland.
- Almost a quarter of people working in Perth & Kinross are paid less than the voluntary higher Living Wage.
- 46% of employees in the area work in small businesses, 10% higher than for Scotland. This is likely to contribute to lower pay in common with other mainly rural authorities.
- On any given day, around 3300 people commute to better paid jobs in neighbouring areas.

What we heard

One of the key opportunities for people to experience a meaningful and fulfilling life is through work. Paid employment has the potential to protect health and contribute to reduced health inequalities, however a good income isn't the only benefit of work; work offers people a sense of purpose, provides friends, the opportunity to develop as an individual, and a sense of community.

"If you get to go to work, you get to see people on a daily basis and you have money to do something with your friends and family at the weekend"

Although the unemployment rate in Perth and Kinross is low (at 3.6%), around 1 in every 10 working-age households are reliant on some form of benefit. The Commission heard that in-work poverty is a growing issue. Due to stagnating wages, reductions in benefits and the increasing cost of living, two people can be working in a household and still be struggling financially. This can be especially true if you live within a rural area, as living costs are generally higher. We met people who work, but couldn't afford to heat the place they call home. We heard that some people feel they are one wage packet away from becoming homeless.

Earnings from jobs in the area have been around 9% less than Scottish average over the last decade. Resident earnings have also grown more slowly than Scotland in the same time, and the difficulties and costs of travelling from rural areas can limit people's capacity to seek and maintain work.

A critical factor impacting upon people being able to enter into work is the accessibility and affordability of good quality childcare, particularly for those who have no extended family in the area. Caring for children and balancing the demands of work and family life are crucial considerations for parents moving into and sustaining employment.

In relation to early learning and childcare (ELC), we heard that there are high uptake rates (ca. 95%); and that providing flexible, affordable, high quality ELC is a priority for the Council. However, parents of young children who gave evidence indicated that it is not as flexible as it needs to be, to enable them to engage more fully in the workplace. On average, in Perth and Kinross, full-time childcare for a child under 2 costs £10,400 a year. Clearly this cost is unsustainable if you are in low paid employment.

Around a quarter of the jobs available within Perth and Kinross are in lower wage sectors such as tourism, hospitality and agriculture; the seasonal nature of this type of work also has a negative impact on household income. The Commissioners noted that a rise in the use of zero hour contracts is only one issue with the broader point about job insecurity. For example, if you are a paid carer, you might be out of the house for 6 -8 hours, yet get paid the equivalent of just a few hours, after unpaid travel time between clients, particularly those that live in rural areas. There appears to be a growing trend for employers to offer less attractive contracts; either to give them a more flexible workforce, or purely because they can. The question is, who speaks up for the rights / interests of people working in these of types of sectors?

We heard about unfair access to work, whether that be through circumstance, ethnicity or heritage, geography, experience, education and training; we noted perceptions that names, addresses and even being over-qualified creates barriers to employment; and the expectation that people should participate in unpaid work trials is simply unfair, bringing with it the potential for exploitation. In some areas, recruitment practices were seen as being stuck in the past, and not offering people,

particularly young people, the best chance to demonstrate their value and successfully land a job.

“The relationship between employers and those seeking work needs to be improved”

Beyond that, a better balance needs to be struck which recognises the positive role of volunteering, or carrying out unpaid caring responsibilities for adults or children, as an important element of the world of work. An example of this is parents taking time out of the job market to raise a family, and give their children the best start in life, but at the same time, feeling pressured to be looking for paid work. We heard other examples where people risk benefit sanctions if they are not actively in the process of seeking work, or increasing their hours. Similarly, when preparing to return to work, there was a sense that employers did not look favourably upon time out of the workplace, regardless of personal circumstance. People felt that the considerable skill set gained while volunteering or caring for loved ones was not considered, or was somehow viewed as less valuable. In this respect, we heard that more could be done to support young carers, and those experiencing mental health issues into work.

We note that the Tay Cities Deal bid and its accompanying economic strategy, offers a clear and inclusive approach to address inequalities, increase economic participation and deliver a more prosperous and fairer future for the region, its communities, people and businesses. We commend the aspiration that Perth and Kinross becomes a Fair Work region within the context of the collaboration of the Tay Cities Deal.

Case Study to be added: Gold Star Awards for local businesses which go the extra mile to help employ local people facing barriers to entering and maintaining employment.

What people told us would make a difference

The Fair Work Convention define fair work as *‘work that offers effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect; that balances rights and responsibilities of employers and workers and that can generate benefits for individual, organisations and society.’*

The Fair Work Framework¹ 2016 outlines each of these dimensions and how delivering fairness in each dimension can benefit employers, workers and society. Fair work matters, not just for organisations and those who work for them. The opportunity to work, the nature and quality of work and of the workplace environment have an impact on wider economic and social objectives, including the reduction of poverty and inequality. The points we heard would make a difference, align well with the fair work framework.

- **Effective Voice:** Beyond any statutory requirements for organised representation it is far more important that we work with business and employers to ensure that employees have an appropriate say in decisions that affect them.
- **Security:** We accept that many employers, for a variety of reasons, cannot commit immediately to paying the living wage, however there are many other ways of valuing employees, and creating a positive experience of work. We call on local businesses to revisit their approach to ensuring employees have greater job security, and within this context, a fair wage
- **Opportunity:** Family-friendly working practices should be promoted across the area, and all sectors, to ensure that more people with children can access and sustain employment. There needs to be greater provision of high quality, flexible and affordable childcare, particularly for parents on low incomes and/or living in rural areas, allowing them to work if they wish to and improve children's pre-school development.
- **Respect:** Understand the broad nature of the barriers to employment by proactively recognising and addressing the stigma attached to a range of life circumstances:
- **Fulfilment** - Not everyone follows a traditional route to work in terms of experience and qualifications. Employers should recognise the value people with volunteering and caring experience bring to the workplace, in terms of resourcefulness, resilience, commitment and skill sets.

¹ <http://www.fairworkconvention.scot/framework/FairWorkConventionFrameworkFull.pdf>

7. A Thriving Third Age

Key Facts

- Approximately 11,000 people aged over 65 live alone across Perth and Kinross
- 1 in 7 Perth and Kinross households comprise one person aged 65 or older
- The 2011 census reported over 13,000 carers in Perth and Kinross. A quarter of these are age 65 or older.
- By 2021, the 75+ population is expected to grow by around 2,000 (12%). Growth varies from 9% in Perth City to 19% in Kinross-shire and the Carse of Gowrie.

What we heard

In the coming years, Perth and Kinross is expected to experience significant demographic change, especially in relation to older people. The number of people aged 75 and above is set to almost double by 2039, to almost 29,000 people. This is the fastest growing age group in Perth and Kinross, and across the area there are already significant inequalities in health between individuals, with people in more affluent areas living longer and having significantly better general health.

The term 'older people' can conjure up an image of frail, ill and bedridden people. However, today's reality means that the majority of these people are likely to be increasingly fit and active, requiring little or no support or services, until much later in life and will be an important and significant resource, with a great contribution to make in their local communities. A characteristic of people living well and independently into older age is that when they do eventually need services or support, change can develop rapidly, and can affect their needs for housing, healthcare and in organising the ordinary activities of daily living.

"The term 'older person' itself is limiting – people shouldn't be written off because of their age"

The Commissioners heard of some fantastic work being undertaken within communities around the provision of care and support. This tended to be found within more affluent areas, where community resilience is generally higher.

Across Perth and Kinross and especially in remote areas, social isolation is a huge issue. There can be a feeling of being left behind or forgotten, as social circles diminish and people's ability to get out and about lessens. For some older people,

just someone visiting them for an hour a week, or helping with their shopping or household chores, makes a huge impact on their quality of life.

People want to feel valued at every stage in their life, and to keep contributing their skills and knowledge. There are many opportunities which would support this, such as intergenerational activities, which provide benefits not just for the older people involved, but also the children, young people, or adults working with them.

“Loneliness is something we hear about on a daily basis”

Importantly, there is a need to see the individual person – and to recognise and support their needs, aspirations and specific circumstances. There is no ‘one size fits all’ solution, but at the heart it’s about people being treated with dignity and respect, and having their wishes taken into account. By taking a person centred approach, people can retain a sense of control over their future and, in many cases, live independently for longer.

“Older people don’t feel valued”

A largely unrecognised issue is the growing number of unpaid carers in the area. This could be a husband caring for his wife or children providing support for aging parents. As the elderly population in Perth and Kinross grows, this will happen more and more. It isn’t easy to look after someone whose health is declining. It can begin to impact on your own health and wellbeing, which may lead to carer breakdown. Ultimately, this can mean that the situation is no longer sustainable and a care home placement may be the only option.

We heard about the need to proactively support carers at each stage of their journey. This may be things like providing some time away from caring duties, receiving support and guidance, or a place where they can meet other people and talk about their own issues. By doing this, they may feel more able to provide care for their loved one at home for longer.

“Move away from doing things to people and try to enable them to do more things for themselves”

Another issue which came across strongly was around the lack of staff in the care sector. This problem exists across the area, but is more acute in the more rural areas. The Commissioners heard that the sector is not positively promoted as a career path and is often negatively viewed. This creates problems in not only

attracting and recruiting staff, but also retaining them. There is a need for a shift in culture and training to encourage the next generation to see the care sector as a positive career option.

The Commissioners also heard of the stigma associated with care homes themselves. Many thought of them as places people go to live out their final stages, whereas in reality, a lot of residents still lead active and fulfilled lives through the various opportunities offered, while receiving the care that they require. While there were many examples of good practice, there was a feeling in some homes that the residents were regarded as patients, and not treated as individuals. Work is required to encourage people in residential care to feel valued and as independent as they possibly can be.

What people told us would make a difference

- Greater understanding of the impact of poverty on people's health and a more co-ordinated approach across CPP organisations, which seeks to promote health and well-being.
- CPP and service providers need to work with communities to proactively develop new solutions / models of care, particularly taking into account the issues of providing care in more remote areas. This may include public, private and third sector organisations considering new ways of operating which promotes care as a valued and respected career option.
- Work be undertaken to further develop socially inclusive, inter-generational and cultural initiatives across the area, to reduce social isolation, share skills and knowledge and increase individual and community resilience.
- Recognise the role of unpaid carers in caring for their loved ones and provide support, appropriate to individual needs, to help them best cope with the challenges they may face.

8. Better Connected – Services, Transport, Digital Lives

Key Facts

- The majority of Perth and Kinross is ranked as within the 20% most access deprived areas of Scotland
- Just over 1 in 5 Perth and Kinross households have no access to a car or van
- 37% of Perth and Kinross households are classed as fuel poor, where more than 10% of income is spent on fuel. 12% are in extreme fuel poverty (20% of income). Both figures are above the Scottish average.
- 90.5% of Perth and Kinross will have access to superfast fibre broadband by December 2018

What we heard

Services

Good working relationships which are respectful, and build trust and confidence are at the heart of supporting people experiencing challenges. An issue that was repeatedly raised was the feeling that people are not being treated as individuals, and that those delivering services did not always take into account their overall circumstances. We heard that people had to explain their situation again and again to various professionals in the course of seeking help. We recognise that particularly in relation to poverty and inequalities, people's issues can be complex; however this sense of being passed from pillar to post can cause frustration and reinforce feelings of powerlessness and despair.

We also heard that people simply don't know what help is on offer, or are fearful of the consequences if they ask for help. People need to have choices and a sense of control over their own destiny, and those offering services need to go beyond what is available within their own organisation, to making the connections with other organisations and services.

By working more closely together, organisations could provide a more proactive and streamlined approach to providing pathways to help and advice (across

organisations), and reduce bureaucracy, form filling and delays which may leave vulnerable people in a state of flux and anxiety.

'People find out about services by accident, rather than knowing where to go when they need help'.

Co-locating services is one way of enabling people to access services from different organisations in one place. However, we heard that this can also create challenges, particularly for people in rural settings, in terms of maintaining privacy about their circumstances, for example accessing drug and alcohol, or homeless services.

Therefore the language used to describe services and the people who use them, can have a major impact on people's willingness to access them, particularly when there is a fear that other people may be judgemental.

'Rural communities can be a bit of a goldfish bowl which can make it difficult to access services - such as support groups for parenting on a Community Campus, when you may have friends or neighbours that work there'.

Through the course of our work, we consistently heard of the importance of having one person as a key contact, who understands the temporary or permanent circumstances of the individual or family, and can foster a relationship of trust so that the right services (which may span different organisations) can be offered and accepted. While the Commission recognise that this may not be possible or appropriate in all circumstances, it should be acknowledged that this would provide those most in need with a sense of consistency, stability and support.

Transport

A third of the population of Perth and Kinross lives in Perth City. Everyone else lives in rural settings, ranging from small towns and villages to very remote locations. Whilst the rural nature of our area brings many benefits, it can also create a number of distinct challenges for the people who live there.

Being able to get from A to B is an important part of life in general, so that people can access services, employment, education and also cultural, sporting and social opportunities, which may not be directly available in the area. For those without the means or ability to run a car, public and / or community transport offers a vital lifeline. However what we heard was that it's not always available when required, can be costly, and also doesn't always get people where they need to be, when they need to be there. For people with disabilities, there can be issues around accessibility. This

can pose major difficulties for people attending hospital appointments, or getting to work on time, for example.

This can also have an isolating effect on people of all ages and stages, leaving them feeling disconnected from friends, colleagues, everyday life, and the outside world.

The Commission heard of some innovative and creative approaches which look beyond traditional solutions. The following story illustrates why different approaches can have a major impact.

Donna's story ... is a lone parent with a part time job two bus rides away. She has to get a child to and from nursery and another to school. She struggled to get to work on time. The effort she was making to sustain work caused pressure on her and stress on her children. This ultimately impacts their readiness to learn and therefore long term life chances. Her job was low paid. She was often late and arrived at work stressed. Inevitably a manager asked about time keeping. Donna had been fearful of raising it because she'd never felt empowered in her life and always felt she must do what was expected. Her employer was amazing. "If only you'd said...I'm sorry we can't pay more, would it help if we moved your start and finish times or worked over 5 days rather than 4..." For the employer these were easy accommodations to make but for Donna they'd been things she could only dream of. Now? Her child care costs less, her travel costs less, her attendance is excellent and noticed, she has pride in herself, her children are less stressed and together they have a bigger chance of success in life.

Digital Lives

Increasingly, organisations are offering services and information online. In theory this should make it easier for people to access some of what's on offer without the need to travel. However, we know that there are many areas of rural Perth and Kinross where broadband is unavailable and mobile coverage is poor.

'Broadband should be viewed as a utility, not a luxury'.

But this is not the only issue. We learned that it can't be assumed that everyone has access to the technology they need to participate in this increasingly digital and automated world. Equally, where people do have devices, they don't always have the technical skills, language or literacy skills or indeed confidence, to use them, or may have a level of disability which makes access more difficult.

There is a very real risk that people are left out, or left behind, by the very thing which has the power to connect us. When organisations are developing online and automated services, full consideration needs to be given as to who will need additional support to access them in this way, how that support will be provided, and by whom.

What people told us would make a difference

- Those working in public, statutory and voluntary services should be encouraged to help people make connections with other organisations who can offer support – a ‘tell us once’ approach should be adopted across the area.
- There needs to be greater understanding of (and acting on) the value of consistency and a key point of contact for people needing support, which builds trust, takes a holistic view of circumstances and also progress, and makes the right connections on behalf of the individual / family.
- Within the context of the Scottish Government’s ambition to deliver broadband in all areas, prioritise areas where coverage would make the biggest difference in terms of service delivery and social connectivity.
- Digital approaches should be used appropriately, and not create additional barriers for anyone in Perth and Kinross, at any age or stage of life.
- Employers and service providers need to work with communities to proactively develop new solutions / models of public transport which keep people mobile and connected to each other, work and life in general. This will be different in different areas, as in Donna’s story.
- A greater number of safe and affordable places to meet (for social, group and community activities), would be helpful for those experiencing loneliness and isolation

9. Next Steps

We recognise that the consequences of poverty and inequality are complex - making a difference is challenging and requires sustained effort and action.

Our recommendations aim to create a renewed focus on the issues which people told us are important – these issues are inter-related, and should be addressed with this in mind. Our intention is to promote a holistic view across key life stages, because disadvantages accumulate over a lifetime.

We call upon the CPP to reflect on what we heard during the course of our work, consider our recommendations, and lead the next phase of this work by taking action to address the specific issues raised in this report.

The Commission recognise that to further support change at this local level, the CPP should influence action at a national level by engaging with the relevant agencies and the Scottish Government.

We believe this report and our recommendations will strengthen existing approaches, support the continuation of conversations / action to address poverty and inequality, and will encourage *all* sections of the community of Perth and Kinross to be active participants in the evolving process of building Fairer Futures for all.

Pop out box

We offer our continued support and interest, and offer to meet to review progress towards prioritising and responding to our recommendations in 6 and 12 months' time.

Appendix 1: Helpful Terms

What is Fairness?

Fairness recognises that each person is of equal worth, and should experience equality of opportunity which enables them to meet their goals and aspirations in life. *This will of course, mean different things for different people, at different times in their life.*

(Perth and Kinross definition)

What are Inequalities?

The term 'inequality' is a way of describing unfairness, where some people have more money, power, resources and opportunities than others. Importantly, this is because of circumstances which are largely beyond a person's control – such as the situation people are born into, and how this plays out throughout their life. This can include gender, age, education, ethnicity, sexual orientation, illness, and the presence of disability or mental health issues, for example.

The impact of inequality, is that it can create disadvantage, and lack of control, which can result in poverty, social isolation, access to adequate housing and so on. Inequality limits opportunities for people to reach their full potential, and live healthier, happier and wealthier lives.

(Adapted from Perth and Kinross Health Inequalities Strategy)

What do we mean by poverty?

Poverty means not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation – and even discrimination – because of your financial circumstances. The constant stress it causes can lead to problems which deprive people of the chance to play a full part in society.

(JRF Definition)

What is inclusive economic growth?

It is economic growth that creates opportunity for all segments of the population and distributes the benefits of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society.

(Adapted from OECD's definition)

What do we mean by community resilience?

This is about how well organised a community is and how able it is to use and create capacity in terms of understanding and using its assets and resources for the benefit of the people who are part of the community.

(Perth and Kinross definition)

Appendix 2: Participating Organisations

- Bobbin Mill
- Centre for Inclusive Living in Perth and Kinross
- Churches Action for the Homeless
- Culture PK
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Ethnic Minorities Law Centre
- Gannochy Trust
- Gowans Child and Family Centre
- Homeless Voice
- Human Rights Innovation Event Participants
- Independent Advocacy
- Kinross-Shire Day Centre
- Kinross-Shire Family Summer Fun Group
- Live Active Leisure
- MECOPP – Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project
- Navigate Project
- NHS – to be expanded
- North Inch Golf Course
- Older People’s Services, NHS Tayside
- One-Stop Women’s Service (OWLS)
- Perth and Kinross Credit Union
- Perth and Kinross Foodbank
- Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership
- Perth Citizens Advice Bureau
- Perth College and the University of the Highlands and Islands
- Perth Islamic Society
- Perth One Stop Shop, Autism Initiatives
- Perth Six Circle
- Perthshire Chamber of Commerce
- Pitlochry Community Hospital, NHS Tayside
- PKAVS – International Group, Minority Communities Hub and Young Carers
- PLUS Perth and Kinross
- Police Scotland
- Royal Voluntary Service
- Saints in the Community, The St. Johnstone Community Trust
- Scottish Care (Local Integration Lead for Perth & Kinross)
- Scottish Fire and Rescue
- Skills Development Scotland
- SSAFA
- Stagecoach
- Tay Cities Deal
- Us and Housing Group

- Perth & Kinross Council: Blairgowrie High School
- Perth & Kinross Council: Newhill Primary School
- Perth & Kinross Council: Perth Academy
- Perth & Kinross Council: Perth Grammar School
- Perth & Kinross Council: Catering Support, Education and Children's Services
- Perth & Kinross Council: Children and Family Services, Education and Children's Services
- Perth & Kinross Council: Communities, Cultural and Community Services, Education and Children's Services
- Perth & Kinross Council: Developing the Young Workforce Programme, Education and Children's Services
- Perth & Kinross Council: Schools Division, Education and Children's Services
- Perth & Kinross Council: Adult Social Work and Social Care, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Community Care, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Community Learning and Development, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Customer and Community Engagement, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Housing, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Housing & Strategic Commissioning, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Integrated Services for Young People, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Revenues and Benefits, Community Care, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Social Work, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Welfare Rights, Housing and Community Safety
- Perth & Kinross Council: Public Service Reform, Culture and Community Development, Chief Executives
- Perth & Kinross Council: Corporate Procurement, The Environment Service
- Perth & Kinross Council: Public Transport, The Environment Service
- Perth & Kinross Council: The Employment Initiatives Team, The Environment Service

Appendix 3: Commissioners

Councillor Archie MacLellan (Chair)

Perth & Kinross Council

George Dodds

Director of Health Equity, NHS Health Scotland

John Fyffe

Senior Depute Chief Executive (Equality, Community Planning & Public Service Reform), Perth & Kinross Council

Paul Graham

Chief Executive, PKAVs

Shirley Laing

Deputy Director Social Justice and Regeneration, Scottish Government

Dr Jim McCormick

Associate Director, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Douglas Robertson

Commercial Director, Stagecoach East of Scotland

Grahame Smith

General Secretary of STUC

Professor Carol Tannahill

Director, Glasgow Centre for Population Health

Alison Todd

Chief Executive, Children 1st

Dr Drew Walker

Director of Public Health, NHS Tayside

Appendix 4: References / Sources

Scottish Government (2016) [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People](#)

Scottish Government (2016) [Fairer Scotland Action Plan](#)

Fair Work Convention (2016) [Fair Work Framework](#)

End Child Poverty (2016) [Child Poverty Estimates](#)

Scottish Parliament (2017) [SPICe Briefing: Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Bill](#)

Perth and Kinross Labour Market Profile - [NOMIS](#)

Perth and Kinross [Stories of Place](#), detailing a range of information about the area, with sources.

[Tay Cities Deal](#): Creating a Smarter and Fairer Region.

Perth [UK City of Culture 2021 bid](#)

Scottish Government (2017) [Children's Social Work Statistics 2015/16](#)

Scottish Government (2017) [Homelessness Statistics](#)

National Records of Scotland (2016) [Local Area Migration Information](#)

[Evidence to Success](#), a CPP project that aimed to **enhance the safe and healthy development of children and young people** in Perth and Kinross. One of the elements is the Incredible Years [parenting programme](#).

Tactran [Thistle Assistance Card](#)

[Safe Place Scheme](#)

Scottish Living Wage [Accreditation](#)

Perth and Kinross [Foodbank](#)