



## Community Planning Improvement Board

# Tackling Inequalities - Key Messages

There is growing evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic and the public health measures taken to address the spread of the virus are widening existing inequalities and exacerbating poorer outcomes for the most disadvantaged groups.

The Community Planning Improvement Board (CPIB) recently brought together key Community Planning partners to gain a deeper shared understanding of the nature and extent of these widening inequalities, their impact on communities, and the role Community Planning can play in addressing these.

The following themes were identified by the CPIB which will be essential as we work together to tackle widening inequalities and their impacts for communities. The CPIB will work with Scottish Government, Community Planning Partners and CPPs to encourage engagement across these issues to help deliver the step-change required.



### **1. Given the increase in inequalities and associated demand from Covid, national and local priorities will need to be rebalanced and reduced to support a more targeted approach if we are to avoid spreading attention and resources too thinly.**

This will be particularly important as we strive to balance the competing pressures around treating the symptoms of increasing inequality and investing in preventative measures that we know will make the difference for future generations. This may require a rebalancing of Scottish Government policy towards a narrower set of priorities, including a meaningful shift from

universality towards greater targeting. Partners will work within the parameters of national policy priorities to target their resources which will be essential if we are to encourage the more ambitious approach to preventative investment advocated for by Christie. This will be a major focus as we mark the 10th anniversary of Christie and reflect on progress to date.



### **2. It is essential to recognise that people have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, and there should be a focus on how we engage with those who have been most profoundly impacted as “experts by experience” to ensure we place lived experience at the heart of decision making.**

People have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and our response measures, and this impact may take some time to come through. Demographic groups that were

already disadvantaged before the pandemic are more likely to experience negative effects in many different areas of their life, including in educational opportunities, employment



prospects, financial security, social outcomes and health and wellbeing. Some of the most impacted groups are children and young people; women; older people who are isolated; people with pre-existing mental health problems; people with long-term disabling physical health conditions; Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities; and unemployed people and those in insecure employment.

It will be essential to listen to and learn from those groups and communities who are disproportionately impacted to ensure their lived experience, insights and realities are at the centre of decision-making that affects them. It will be important to learn from the work of the Poverty & Inequality Commission who have placed engagement with 'experts by experience' at the heart of their strategic priorities.



### **3. Urgent mitigation action is required within CPP planning in relation to the removal of the Universal Credit uplift.**

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, most areas in the UK will see more than one in three families and their children affected as a result of the £1,040-a-year cut. It is predicted that this policy change will have deep and

far reaching consequences, placing low-income families into deeper poverty and debt and removing billions of pounds from local economies.



### **4. Urgent action is required to improve our understanding in relation to the impact of system backlogs on inequalities.**

The pandemic has resulted in backlogs across public services, including in social care, health, schools and courts. An important shared priority as we emerge from Covid will be to improve our understanding of the extent of system

backlogs and the consequential impact of these on inequalities, and to identify how partners can collaborate effectively and innovatively to respond to the challenges this presents.



### **5. We must learn from research in the UK and internationally on tackling inequalities to strengthen our understanding of 'what works' and use this learning to drive recovery and renewal.**

The system cannot respond effectively without knowing and driving forward 'what works' in terms of tackling inequality. This will be essential if we are to ensure we do not lose the gains we have made in the last 15 months. From a public service reform perspective, we must build on the momentum we have created from the pandemic

and use it as a catalyst for further reform. Many previous assumptions in terms of what is possible have been disproved and we need to ensure this learning transforms our thinking moving forward. Community Planning partners and partnerships are uniquely placed to drive this agenda.



## **6. Wellbeing should be at the heart of social and economic recovery, and we should ensure that the economic recovery benefits those people who need it.**

The Covid 19 Marmot Review highlighted the *'urgent need to do things differently, to build a society based on the principles of social justice; to reduce inequalities of income and wealth; to build a well-being economy that puts achievement of health and well-being at the heart of government strategy'*. Many strategies for tackling poverty and inequality will focus on fair work and Community wealth building, and Community Planning could play a vital role in

the calibration that's required around this. This will be increasingly important given the growing numbers of working households and families struggling to manage on very low incomes. The Fairer Scotland Duty provides a further driver for this, introducing a duty requiring Community Planning partners to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.



## **7. National and local partners should redouble efforts to tackle child poverty and utilise all available policy and spending levers to make progress towards the ambitious 2030 targets.**

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets ambitious targets to significantly reduce child poverty in Scotland by 2030. Despite this, rates of child poverty were rising in every local authority area in Scotland even before COVID-19. Projections suggest that the impact of the pandemic has the potential to exacerbate and entrench child poverty. It is therefore essential that our response continues to go beyond mitigation and crisis management and that child poverty is seen as a key tenet of broader COVID recovery and renewal plans, seeking to maximise the use of all available

resources and all policy levers to drive positive change. It will also be important to identify and build important policy linkages that can be further developed to support work on child poverty. This will be essential in order to support child wellbeing and the future health and prosperity of our communities. Annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports, which are produced jointly by local authorities and health boards under the section 13 of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act, describe current work and represent an opportunity to drive further change and improvement.



## **8. CPPs should consider if their locality plans are supporting those communities who experience the greatest inequalities and targeting resource accordingly.**

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Act places specific duties on CPPs to develop locality planning arrangements which tackle inequalities for communities facing disadvantage in well targeted and effective ways. As CPPs plan and organise for economic

and social renewal in light of the pandemic, and in many cases consider how they align and refocus priorities and targets in LOIPs and locality plans, particular emphasis should be given to how effective and targeted their approach is to tackling inequalities.





**9. Volunteering has the potential to provide significant value in recovery and renewal, however greater efforts are required to promote access for those people who need support to volunteer.**

Volunteering can provide significant value in recovery and renewal efforts. The response to the Covid pandemic has seen a huge growth in overall volunteering levels and it will be important to invest in building the necessary capacity to sustain this going forward. Importantly, evidence shows that underlying social inequalities present substantive barriers to volunteering and all too often, those who potentially have the most to gain are the least likely to participate. The Covid pandemic has exacerbated this, and there has been a

significant reduction in volunteering for people who need support to volunteer during this period. Meaningful engagement is a huge contributory factor in people's mental health and wellbeing, and it is vital we increase our focus on how to promote greater access to volunteering, particularly for those people who need support to volunteer. The Volunteering for All national strategy has a keen focus on inequalities, and CPPs will have an important contribution to make to current action planning.



**10. Community Planning partners should consider how they are making links with the Digital Strategy for Scotland, with a perspective on inequalities.**

Digital inequalities are more likely to be experienced by those who are already disadvantaged, whether this relates to digital literacy, connectivity or access to digital devices/data. Closing the digital divide is critical to the future of a fairer Scotland. Enhanced use of digital can help marginalised groups access

public services and feel more engaged in society, whilst also supporting the economically disadvantaged to become more employable. Community Planning partners and partnerships have a key role to play in shaping progress in this area.



**11. National and local decisions in key policy areas should reflect the Climate change emergency and the disproportionate impacts experienced by the most vulnerable in our communities.**

Climate change will exacerbate inequalities and has the potential to push more people into poverty. The cross-cutting nature of climate change brings challenges for policy and decision making, but also opportunities through co-benefits for health, socioeconomic outcomes, organisational and joint budgets, and community resilience. There are a number of tangible

ways CPPs and CP partners can add value and play an instrumental role in delivering a just transition to Net Zero, and also opportunities for significant collaborative gain. These include: direct impact through procurement and asset management; place shaping and empowering community action; reducing duplication; providing leadership through collaboration.



**12. Investment should be encouraged in place-based approaches in recognition that inequalities are not caused by one single issue, but by a complex mix of environmental and social factors which play out in a local area, or place.**

Tackling this complex web requires a joined-up, place-based approach, drawing on the assets

and organisations in any one place. Community Planning embodies this approach.



Local  
Authority



NHS



Police



Fire



Enterprise  
Agency



Third  
Sector



Colleges/  
Universities



Integrated  
Joint Board



National  
Park  
Authority

## More Information

Visit [www.improvementservice.org.uk/cpib](http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/cpib) for information about the Community Planning Improvement Board

For information on and support for community planning, visit the Community Planning Network in Scotland at <https://khub.net/group/communityplanningnetworkinscotland>