



**One Parent
Families Scotland**

changing lives, challenging poverty

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Submission to the UK Child Poverty Taskforce

Subject: Addressing Child Poverty in Single Parent Families

Dear Members of the Child Poverty Taskforce,

I am writing to highlight the critical issue of child poverty within single parent families in Scotland. Single parent families face unique and significant challenges that contribute to higher rates of poverty among their children. Addressing these challenges is essential for creating a more equitable society where all children have the opportunity to achieve their potential. It's a national disgrace that the UK sits 27th in the UNICEF Innocenti ranking of child poverty in OECD and EU countries. ¹

Over 40% of children born in the UK in 2000 were not living with both biological parents by age 11years.² Parental separation and single parenthood are therefore key mainstream issues.

Single parent families are disproportionately affected by economic hardship, limited access to sustainable well paid employment, and social isolation. These factors not only impact the well-being of the parents but also have profound effects on the development and future prospects of their children. It is imperative that the government's Child Poverty Strategy includes targeted interventions to support single parent families and alleviate child poverty.

This submission aims to highlight the specific challenges faced by single parent families and propose actionable strategies to address these issues. By implementing these recommendations, we can make significant strides towards reducing child poverty and improving the lives of single parent families across the UK.

¹ [UNICEF-Innocenti-Report-Card-18-Child-Poverty-Amidst-Wealth-Exec-Summary-2023.pdf](#)

² [Family change, wellbeing and social policy - Nuffield Foundation](#)

One Parent Families Scotland

One Parent Families Scotland is the national organisation for single parent families. Our vision is of a Scotland where single parent families are celebrated in all their diversity, are treated fairly and live free from discrimination and poverty.³

We support family wellbeing, empower single parents with the right advice and information and enable parents to access training, employment and education. Our national advice and information service and family hubs in six local areas reach thousands of single parent families each year.

We campaign for improvements in the here and now and for structural and systemic change alongside single parents who are experts in their dual role of caregiving and providing for their children. We take an intersectional approach, recognising most single parents are women and that many BAME, disabled and young single parents face multiple structural barriers affecting access to services and opportunities.

Background Information

There are 144,000 single parent families in Scotland, one in four of all families with dependent children.⁴

- Single parent families make up 25% of all families, and 92% are headed by women. Around 80% of single parents are aged between 25 and 50 years old and less than 1% are under 20 .
- Most (65%) single parents with dependent children in Scotland are in paid employment.
- Four in ten (90,000) children in poverty in Scotland live in a single parent family and 39% of children in single parent families live in poverty.

Single parents have been disproportionately impacted by cuts to the UK social security system, from the benefit cap to the two-child limit, to the young parent penalty which abolished previous policy of paying parents under 25years the adult rate of benefits.

Findings from the latest Financial Fairness Tracker Survey from Bristol University shows 57% of single parent households are either struggling or in serious financial difficulty, compared to 45% of couples with children. Three-in-ten (29%) report being unable to afford a balanced and healthy diet. The report says, "this is perhaps unsurprising given that children living with one adult (predominantly the mother) are more likely to be in poverty (49%) than those living with two adults (25%)."⁵

Stricter work requirements introduced by the last UK Government now require single parents in receipt of Universal Credit to work up to 30 hours once their child turns three. This is despite single mothers facing multiple barriers when looking for work or

³ www.opfs.org.uk

⁴ https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/3100/child-poverty-in-scotland_priority-groups_lone-parent-families_briefing.pdf

⁵ www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/geography/Jan_2025

to increase their hours, the biggest of which is access to affordable and flexible childcare.

The House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee has noted that evidence submitted during an inquiry on child poverty listed “rising living costs, low pay, limited and insecure work and reforms to social security since 2010” as “factors driving recent trends in child poverty”⁶

Challenges Faced by Single Parent Families

1. **Economic Hardship:** Single parents often struggle with lower household incomes due to the reliance on a single earner. This economic strain is exacerbated by the high cost of childcare, housing, and basic necessities. Many single parent families have no savings, and a significant number rely on food banks to meet their basic needs.
2. **Barriers to Sustainable Employment:** Single parents frequently face barriers to employment, including inflexible work hours, lack of affordable childcare, and limited opportunities for career advancement. These factors contribute to higher rates of unemployment and underemployment among single parents. Although 66% of single parents are in employment, many are in low-paying or part-time jobs that do not provide sufficient income or the chance of advancement to lift their families out of poverty.
3. **Social Isolation and Mental Health:** The demands of single parenting can lead to social isolation and increased stress, impacting the mental health of both the parent and the child. Single parents often lack the support networks that two-parent families might have, making it more challenging to balance work and family responsibilities. This social isolation can further hinder the parent's ability to seek and maintain employment, intensifying the cycle of poverty.

Policy Priorities

1. Social Security:

Increase financial assistance for families on Universal Credit, which will include many single parent families, through a targeted benefit similar to the Scottish Child Payment. Child poverty is on course to increase in most of the UK by the end of this parliament, with only Scotland bucking the trend, according to analysis by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF).

⁶ <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/child-poverty-statistics-causes-and-the-uks-policy-response/>

Scotland's relative success – its child poverty rates are projected to be 10 percentage points lower than England's by 2029 – is attributed by JRF to Holyrood's more generous child benefits and its plans to scrap the two-child benefit limit.⁷

Providing a stable financial foundation can help alleviate the immediate economic pressures faced by single parent families.

Fix three aspects of the technical design of Universal Credit's automated payment that negatively affects working single mother claimants. These are:

1. Payment errors resulting from inaccurate data on wages used to calculate the UC monthly payment.
2. Misalignment of UC payment timing with the timeframes in which working claimants receive wages, due to differences in employee payment schedules.
3. Misalignment of childcare costs reimbursement with the payment schedule to the childcare provider. Due to the limited time to report childcare charges to DWP, delays may result in late or no payment of the reimbursement to the parent.

These problems relate either to an automatic data feed of claimants' earnings data used to calculate the monthly UC payment for workers or to the 'monthly assessment period' that is used to determine what earnings data is included in the payment calculation.

Research by Edinburgh University has shown that because single mothers make up the largest percentage of workers on Universal Credit, these design features will negatively impact this demographic disproportionately at the group level.⁸ To illustrate these impacts, OPFS has supplied three real-life case studies for each of the three problem areas highlighted. These cases typify the experiences of many of the single mothers who come to OPFS for advice on problems with UC. We propose three adjustments to the UC system that would address these problematic design features that working claimants face:

1. Make the dispute process concerning errors of earnings data faster and allow claimants to submit their own evidence of earnings.
2. Allow adjustable and flexible monthly assessment periods that account for different employer payment patterns.
3. Provide up-front reimbursement of childcare costs, as a standard, so that reimbursement is no longer retroactive and tied to the timing of the monthly assessment period.

Scrap the two-child limit to benefit payments: Abolishing the two-child limit would cost the Government £2.5 billion in 2024-25. These costs are low compared to the harm that the policy causes and scrapping the two-child limit would be one of the most

⁷ [Child poverty predicted to rise in most of UK except Scotland | Poverty | The Guardian](#)

⁸ opfs.org.uk/universal-credit/design-problems-of-universal-credit

efficient ways to drive down child poverty rates. If abolished today, 490,000 children would be lifted out of poverty.⁹

Remove the benefit cap: Like the two-child limit the benefit cap disproportionately affects families with children. Although the Scottish Government mitigates the Benefit Cap, this money could be spent elsewhere if it were abolished.

The IFS reports that child poverty has increased, particularly among families with three or more children. The benefit cap, along with other policies like the two-child limit, has contributed to this rise. They estimate that abolishing the benefit cap would cost around £500 million per year. They suggest that removing both the benefit cap and the two-child limit would be more effective in reducing child poverty. This combined approach would lift 620,000 children out of absolute poverty, compared to 540,000 if only the two-child limit were reversed. This would come at a cost of £3.3 billion annually.¹⁰

Abolish the ‘Young Parent Benefit Penalty’ and reinstate young single parents’ benefit level to the same level as parents over 25yrs. We have been sounding the alarm for the past two years that many young single mothers and their children are increasingly having to go without even the basic essentials. The inadequacy of the UK social security system is a key driver of this, with the basic rate of support within Universal Credit (UC) not only at a historic low, but even lower for parents under 25 years.

People under 25 years are paid a lower rate of UC than older claimants in the same circumstances. The impact of this on young parents, who were entitled to the same rate of support under the ‘legacy benefits’ system, has been described by OPFS as a “young parent penalty”. A wide range of organisations (over 90) working with children, families and women around the UK, alongside academic experts in poverty and cross-party MPs have called for a reversal of this policy.¹¹

UC replaces several legacy social security benefits (e.g., Jobseekers’ Allowance, Income Support and Employment Support Allowance, Tax Credits). When a younger parent is getting UC they receive less than parents over 25, purely based on their age. This is different from the legacy benefits systems where all parents are entitled to the same basic allowance, regardless of their age. This recognises that the costs parents face are similar regardless of age.

The direct result of this change is that under UC:

- Couple parents under 25 are approximately £100 a month worse off than couple parents over 25.
- Single parents under 25 are approximately £65 a month worse off than single parents over 25.

⁹ opfs.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/policy-research/universal-credit-pre-budget-briefing-on-the-two-child-benefit-limit

¹⁰ <https://ifs.org.uk/news/abolishing-two-child-limit-would-be-cost-effective-way-reducing-child-poverty-no-silver-bullet>

¹¹ [End Young Parent Poverty: Top up the Scottish Child Payment](#)

For young single parents this is particularly challenging because they are the sole earner and carer for their family; in the context of restrictive UC rules and expensive childcare, it is often extremely difficult for single parents - 92% of whom are women - to find and balance paid work with caring for children.

The rationale offered by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for providing young people with a lower level of social security is that they are likely to still live with their parents and that it is intended as an incentive to work. However, this does not take account of the fact that young parents face considerable, well-documented barriers to getting into work, particularly work which pays sufficiently to remove the need for social security, such as lower educational qualifications and employment experience, a lack of affordable, flexible childcare, and pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

According to analysis by the Social Security Advisory Committee in 2018, young parents are considerably less likely than other young people to live with their own parents. The same report highlights that three quarters of under 25-year-olds who are claiming Housing Benefit independently are women, and that this gender disparity is largely as a result of having a child.

Reform benefit conditionality based on the threat of sanctions. We know from our service delivery in 6 local authority areas and our national lone parent helpline that the sanctions regime under Universal Credit can leave single parents with reduced income for weeks or even months, exacerbating poverty and hardship. We need to **replace conditionality and sanctions with specialist support** (The DWP 'New Deal for Lone Parents' was a great example ¹²) that enables single parents to access and retain work that fits in with caring for their children.¹³

OPFS is carrying out a consultation with single parents and then practitioners to collect their views on how conditionality and sanctions impact on them.¹⁴ The consultation will also gather views on how conditionality affects the effectiveness of Scotland's employability framework 'No-one Left Behind.'¹⁵ A report will be available on the findings in April 2025.

2. Child Maintenance

Include a focus on child maintenance and reforming the system in the new child poverty strategy. Research led by OPFS, in partnership with IPPR and Fife Gingerbread, into the Child Maintenance Service highlights that the system is failing parents. It is adding to conflict, not dealing with domestic abuse issues in a trauma informed manner and is contributing to the mental and financial strain placed on parents unable to access the financial support for their children.

¹² [hasluck_2000_esr51rep.pdf](#)

¹³ [Conditionality, enforcement and interventionism in responses to street homelessness and 'street culture'](#)

¹⁴ [Benefits conditionality survey launched - One Parent Families Scotland](#)

¹⁵ [No One Left Behind: Employability Strategic Plan 2024-27 | Employability in Scotland](#)

Funded by The Robertson Trust¹⁶ the research aims are to drive systemic change in the UK child maintenance system. It explores options for making changes as to how we in Scotland approach child maintenance as a source of income for children, and to develop and test new approaches to child maintenance by working with families to enable an increase in the successful receipt of child maintenance for children. The second stage will offer policy recommendations to all levels of government, aimed at transforming the child maintenance system and ensuring children's rights are at the centre.

The report draws on a mix of quantitative and qualitative research, including focus groups with 'paying' and 'receiving parents', public polling, expert consultations, and statistical analysis. It reveals the current child maintenance system, intended to improve satisfaction among separated parents, has instead led to widespread dissatisfaction and trauma.¹⁷

3. Affordable, Flexible Early Years & School-age Childcare

Expand access to affordable, flexible and high-quality childcare services. This would enable single parents to pursue employment and education opportunities without the burden of excessive childcare costs. Although childcare is devolved it is our understanding that when the UK government increases spending on a devolved matter like childcare in England, Scotland receives a proportionate increase in its block grant.¹⁸ This means that if there is a significant increase in childcare spending in England, Scotland's budget will also increase to reflect this change.

OPFS believes high quality, affordable, accessible and flexible childcare needs to be at the heart of early year's policies to: reach the target to reduce child poverty; allow single parents to access both full-time and part-time employment; give children new opportunities and keep them safe; and enable employers to secure the skills, knowledge and creativity of single parents.

We have published a position paper, produced in partnership with Close the Gap, which presents a set of principles which should drive the next stages in the development of Scotland's childcare offer. The principles describe a system of childcare that promotes women's socio-economic and labour market equality, advances children's rights, and addresses child poverty.¹⁹

1. A system of childcare that puts choice for all families at the heart of provision.
2. A universal funded entitlement of 50 hours per week for children aged 6 months and above that is free at the point of use for all families.
3. A high-quality service which delivers positive outcomes for children and realises children's rights.

¹⁶ [Transforming Child Maintenance - One Parent Families Scotland](#)

¹⁷ [OPFS Child Maintenance Report 1.pdf](#)

¹⁸ [Barnett formula | Institute for Government](#)

¹⁹ [A childcare system for all - principles to drive the next stages of Scotland's childcare offer](#)

4. A diverse and skilled childcare workforce that is valued, fairly paid, and gender balanced.
5. Flexible delivery that enables families to access childcare when they need and want it.
6. Investment in childcare should be considered as necessary infrastructure for a sustainable wellbeing economy and a good society.
6. Work towards a childcare system that is not based on profit making.
7. Investing in childcare is good for the economy

The current childcare system is not achieving its potential to narrow the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their peers or enable parents to work – and the families most likely to miss out are the ones that need the support the most

We want to see reform that recognises early years childcare and education and school age childcare as essential social infrastructure and that creates a system that works for children, families, workers, providers and employers . Early years education and childcare should be recognised as part of the education system, with supply side funding and every family able to access the education and care they need when they need it. A shift to supply-side funding for childcare in the UK would involve the government directly funding childcare providers rather than giving financial support to parents.

In practical terms a model of flexible daycare was developed and tested by One Parent Families Scotland and is now delivered through Flexible Childcare Services Scotland.²⁰ Established in 2019, this social enterprise aims to create equity of access to high-quality, tailored early learning and school-age childcare solutions for all children, families, and communities across Scotland. To achieve this they have created a unique, flexible childcare model that allows families to book-by-the-hour, pay-as-they-go and change their bookings each week in line with their childcare needs. This helps parents to save money on their childcare while presenting them with opportunities to increase their income by removing childcare as a barrier to work.

FCSS has grown steadily and currently delivers flexible childcare from twenty-two registered services around the country. Evaluations of the service showed how vital it is for parents to be able to study, secure work, increase their hours and progress in work. The adoption of this approach in delivering 50 hours of childcare in each local authority, tailored to local demographics, would provide a lifeline for families on low incomes.²¹

4. Flexible Work Arrangements

Encourage employers to offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work, flexible hours, and job-sharing opportunities. This would help single parents balance

²⁰ [About - Flexible Childcare Services Scotland](#)

²¹ [Families-House-flexible-daycare-2016-17.pdf](#)

work and family responsibilities more effectively. Policies that promote work-life balance can lead to higher job satisfaction and productivity among single parents.²²

Flexible work arrangements can significantly help single parents balance work and family responsibilities more effectively.^{23 24}

1. **Improved Work-Life Balance:** Flexible work hours and remote work options allow single parents to better manage their time, reducing stress and improving overall life satisfaction. This flexibility helps them attend to their children's needs without compromising their professional responsibilities.
2. **Increased Job Satisfaction:** Single parents who have access to flexible work arrangements report higher job satisfaction. This is because they can fulfil both their work and family obligations more efficiently, leading to a more positive outlook on their employment
3. **Enhanced Productivity:** When single parents are given the flexibility to work from home or adjust their hours, they often become more productive. This is due to the reduced stress of commuting and the ability to work during their most productive hours
4. **Social Support:** Flexible work arrangements can also foster a supportive work environment. Employers who offer these options are seen as more understanding and supportive, which can enhance the well-being of single parents

Overall, these arrangements not only benefit single parents but also contribute to a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture.

5. Single Parent Tailored Employability Programmes with Family Support and Money Advice.

Invest in education, training and ILM programmes that equip single parents with the skills needed to secure stable and well-paying jobs. OPFS has developed a model which integrates family support, peer mentoring and money advice in its employability programmes. This enhances parents skills and qualifications so they can access better employment opportunities and improve their long-term economic prospects.²⁵

OPFS has also tested an ILM model co-produced with single parents, tailored to their needs, in partnership with Public Health Scotland (PHS), to support 12 single parents

²² <https://workingfamilies.org.uk/news-events/blogs/qa-how-can-flexible-working-support-single-parents/>

²³ [How can we make flexible working fit for purpose for parents? | King's Global Institute for Women's Leadership | King's College London](#)

²⁴ [Working-Families-Index-2022-Highlights-Report.pdf](#)

²⁵ [OPFS Glasgow Evaluation Report low_res.pdf](#)

into paid work with PHS.²⁶ Drawing on OPFS's expertise in supporting lone parents into employment, Public Health Scotland partnered with us to "single-parent proof" their workforce policies, ensuring these policies more closely align with the realities faced by lone parents. Participants in the pathway benefit from:

Pre-Employment Training: A six-week OPFS Academy programme covering work-family balance, financial planning, and essential skills, with guaranteed interviews for participants.

- **Paid Employment Opportunities:** the opportunity to apply for an 18-month work contract with Public Health Scotland.
- **Skills Development:** Access to SCQF Level 5 or 6 in Business Administration through the City of Glasgow College to enhance their skills and employability.
- **Comprehensive Support:** holistic support and assistance covering childcare and travel costs to ease financial pressures.

After completing a 6-week training academy at OPFS, parents participating secured an 18-month work contract within the Business Service area of Public Health Scotland.

Policies focused on systemic and transformational change

We support systemic and transformational change in five key areas.

1. **A Minimum Income Guarantee** which ensures that no one falls below a certain income level necessary for a dignified life
2. **Universal Basic Infrastructure** which ensures everyone has access to essential services and infrastructure, regardless of their income or location through collective provision rather than relying solely on market forces.
3. **Just Transition to Net Zero** which guarantees that the shift to a low-carbon economy is fair and inclusive, leaving no one behind.
4. **A Wellbeing Economy** which puts our human and planetary needs at the centre of its activities, ensuring that these needs are all equally met
5. **Further use of Tax Powers** to help harness the resources required to pay for public services and to reduce poverty and inequality.

²⁶ [OPFS and Public Health Scotland recognised for pioneering lone parent employment partnership - One Parent Families Scotland](#)

We support systemic and transformational change in five key areas:

1. Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG)

A Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) ensures that no-one falls below a certain income level necessary for a dignified life. It can be provided through employment, targeted welfare payments, and other state-supported services. The goal is to reduce poverty and ensure everyone can meet their basic needs.

A **Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG)** offers several potential benefits²⁷:

1. **Reduced Poverty:** By ensuring a minimum income, MIG can significantly lower poverty rates.
2. **Financial Security:** It provides a safety net, helping individuals and families manage periods of financial uncertainty.
3. **Improved Health and Wellbeing:** With more stable incomes, people can afford better healthcare and healthier lifestyles, leading to improved overall health.
4. **Economic Stability:** Increased consumption from guaranteed incomes can stimulate economic growth.
5. **Social Equity:** MIG can help address income inequality, providing everyone with a fair chance to succeed.

These benefits collectively contribute to a more equitable and resilient society.

2. Universal Basic Infrastructure & Services

There are vast inequalities in collective assets. Provision is worse in poorer areas than in rich areas. A policy which provides a 'Universal Basic Infrastructure' ensures everyone has access to essential services and infrastructure, regardless of their income or location through collective provision rather than relying solely on market forces.²⁸ It builds on the ideas of collective services and infrastructure and the importance of providing them not just for individuals but also for improving local and national economic growth and connecting communities to wider economic and industrial strategies.²⁹ Key elements of universal basic infrastructure include

- **Physical infrastructure:** railway stations, bus stops and broadband connectivity.
- **Public/social infrastructure:** clinics and health centres; GP practices; hospitals; mental health centres and practitioners; dental care; childcare; state primary and secondary schools; further education establishments; police stations; libraries; and municipal parks and gardens.
- **Private infrastructure:** banks and building societies; cash machines; post offices; chemists and pharmacies; convenience stores and independent supermarkets; supermarket chains and restaurants

²⁷ [Economic Impact of a Minimum Income Guarantee: policy evidence - gov.scot](#)

²⁸ [Townscape-UBI-Report-digital.pdf](#)

²⁹ [The case for universal basic services | New Economics Foundation](#)

We can only flourish as a society – now and in the future – if we act together and take collective responsibility to provide all of us with life's essentials.

3. Just Transition to Net Zero

One Parent Families Scotland has been involved in the Scottish Governments Climate Policy Engagement Network³⁰, as well as the Just Transition Commission which provides independent scrutiny and advice on how to put justice at the heart of climate action in Scotland.³¹ Our involvement in these activities has been informed by our consultations with and support of single parents around topics related to the transition to net zero, such as transport, employment, opportunities for accessing training and gaining qualifications, housing, and energy costs.

Parents told us they thought a just transition to net zero should be linked into employability initiatives, so that work to achieve net zero and work to reduce poverty supports each other. Without this interconnectedness there is a risk of reproducing and deepening inequalities.³²

A just transition to net zero must include a recognition that investing in job creation in more carbon neutral sectors such as the care and childcare sectors – which are female dominated – is an important part of the transition to net zero.

A Just Transition to Net Zero ensures that the shift to a low-carbon economy is fair and inclusive, leaving no one behind.³³ This concept emphasises the need to protect workers, communities, and vulnerable groups as we move away from fossil fuels and towards sustainable energy sources.

Key Elements of a Just Transition:

1. **Decent Work Opportunities:** Creating new, green jobs that provide fair wages, safe working conditions, and benefits
2. **Social Inclusion:** Ensuring that all communities, especially those historically marginalized, benefit from the transition.
3. **Environmental Justice:** Addressing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involving workers, businesses, and communities in planning and decision-making processes
5. **Policy Support:** Implementing policies that support retraining, social protection, and economic diversification

By focusing on these elements, a just transition will achieve a sustainable, equitable, and resilient net-zero future. We want to ensure that single parents are part of the focus of

³⁰ [Public engagement - Climate change - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/public-engagement-climate-change/pages/12.aspx)

³¹ [Just Transition Commission](https://www.justtransition.scot/)

³² [March-24-Just-Transition-engagement-report-One-Parent-Families-Scotland.pdf \(opfs.org.uk\)](https://www.opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/March-24-Just-Transition-engagement-report-One-Parent-Families-Scotland.pdf)

³³ [Just Transition Commission](https://www.justtransition.scot/)

policies to achieve a just transition to net zero, so they are not left behind or disadvantaged by the shift to a low-carbon economy.

4. Wellbeing Economy

A Wellbeing Economy is an economic system designed to prioritise the well-being of people and the planet over mere economic growth. Instead of focusing solely on GDP, it aims to achieve social, health, cultural, equity, and environmental outcomes.

Key Principles of a Wellbeing Economy:

1. Human and Planetary Needs: Ensuring that economic activities meet the needs of people and the environment
2. Quality of Life: Promoting policies that enhance the quality of life for all citizens
3. Sustainability: Fostering sustainable practices that protect natural resources and promote long-term ecological health
4. Equity and Inclusion: Addressing inequalities and ensuring that everyone has access to opportunities and resources.

Instead of focusing solely on GDP, it aims to achieve social, health, cultural, equity, and environmental outcomes.³⁴

5. Progressive Taxation

We need a fairer tax system that takes more from the very wealthy. A tax system that actively redistributes wealth to tackle inequality, and that funds high quality public services. The UK has four big challenges and changes to the tax system could help to contribute to tackling them .

1. NHS and Public Services: Our NHS and public services need more money. We can fund them by taxing the wealthy and big companies more.
2. Inequality: A few people have most of the wealth, while others are getting poorer. We can spread wealth more evenly by taxing the super-rich and using that money to help everyone.
3. Climate Change: We need to reduce carbon emissions and move to a sustainable economy. The tax system should support these efforts and stop giving tax breaks to polluters.
4. Democracy: Power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of a few. We want a tax system that benefits the majority, not just the rich.

³⁴ [What is a Wellbeing Economy : Wellbeing Economy Alliance](#)

OPFS is a member of the newly formed Tax Justice Scotland Campaign, calling for the Scottish Parliament to use its tax powers to help deliver a greener, more equal Scotland where everyone can thrive. We also call for UK-level reforms to better tax wealth.³⁵

Conclusion

Addressing child poverty in single parent families requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. The unique challenges faced by families headed by a single parents (usually a mother) including economic hardship, limited access to employment, and social isolation, necessitate targeted interventions. By implementing the proposed strategies—enhanced financial support, affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, mental health support, and single parent tailored education and training programmes—we can make significant strides towards reducing child poverty and improving the lives of single parent families across the UK.

It is vital that the government's Child Poverty Strategy recognises and addresses the specific needs of single parent families and coproduces policy solutions with them. By doing so, we can create a more equitable society where all children, regardless of their family structure, have the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. I look forward to the positive changes that the Child Poverty Taskforce will bring to the lives of single parent families across the UK.

Yours Sincerely,

Marion Davis

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³⁵ [Home - Tax Justice Scotland](#)