

<b>Institution:</b> The University of Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt University (Edinburgh Strategic Alliance)		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA13 Architecture, Built Environment and Planning		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Preventing and mitigating child poverty and inequality		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> March 2014 – December 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Morag Treanor	Lecturer in Quantitative Social Policy	March 2014 – August 2017 (University of Edinburgh)
Morag Treanor	Professor of Child and Family Inequalities	15 April 2019 – Present (Heriot-Watt University)
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> September 2014 - July 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b>		
<p>Treanor's research on child poverty has led to changes across legislation, local authority policies, planning and practice, the practice of health and education professionals and the campaigning and influencing of third sector partners. As a direct result of her work, approximately 120,000 children annually who are living in poverty across Scotland now have access to a GBP100.00 school clothing grant and, in several local authorities, to free meals in breakfast clubs and during school holidays. In addition, services have been introduced to ensure the uptake of child-related benefits to maximise the incomes of families, in schools and at the point of pregnancy and birth via health services.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b>		
<p>Treanor's research examines the implications of poverty on children's social, emotional, behavioural and educational outcomes, and on maternal mental health. Her research interrogates how children and families are impacted by public policy and how they navigate financial structures and statutory services [3.1; 3.5]. There are two strands to this research. The first, longitudinal, quantitative strand analyses birth cohort data compiled through the Growing up in Scotland survey, which follows 5000 children in Scotland annually from birth, and other sources of data such as administrative data [3.3; 3.4]. The analyses of these data explore the impacts of poverty and inequality on the outcomes of children and their mothers, in particular children's social, emotional and behavioural well-being, maternal mental health, child cognitive development and child and maternal educational outcomes [3.3; 3.4].</p> <p>The second strand of this research uses a longitudinal qualitative methodology to explore the experiences of families living in poverty, for example in navigating the welfare system in the shadow of austerity and in engaging with statutory services, e.g. education [3.2]. The same families have been interviewed each year since 2013 to explore the impacts of welfare reform on their lives [3.1].</p> <p>Key insights generated by the research include:</p>		

- it is not lone parenthood that is associated with poorer outcomes in children but the impoverished socio-economic circumstances and area-level deprivation (neighbourhoods and communities) that lone parents inhabit due to public policy decisions;
- it is not only income poverty, but financial vulnerability, material and area-based deprivation, that have adverse impacts on children and mothers' emotional and mental health;
- that the access to, and the application and delivery of financial support, particularly in more deprived communities, inhibits families living in poverty from applying for or receiving it;
- the statutory systems in place for families living in poverty to apply for or receive financial support in themselves create barriers to access that support; and
- children living in poverty have poorer educational outcomes not because they have less ability or because they do not value education but because the structures and processes of education are intrinsically alienating to children living in poverty and to their parents.

### 3. References to the research

[3.1] Treanor, M 2020, *Child poverty: aspiring to survive*. Policy Press.

[3.2] Treanor, M 2018, 'Falling Through the Cracks: The Cost of the School Day for Families Living in In-work and Out-of-work Poverty', *Scottish Affairs*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 486-511. <https://doi.org/10.3366/scot.2018.0259>

[3.3] Treanor, M. (2016) 'The Effects of Financial Vulnerability and Mothers' Emotional Distress on Child Social, Emotional and Behavioural Well-Being: A Structural Equation Model', *Sociology*, 50(4), pp. 673–694. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038515570144>.

[3.4] Treanor, M 2016, 'Social assets, low income and child social, emotional and behavioural wellbeing', *Families, Relationships and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 209-228. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204674315X14281323517164>

[3.5] Frank, J, Bromley, C, Doi, L, Estrade, M, Jepson, R, McAteer, J, Robertson, T, Treanor, M & Williams, A 2015, 'Seven key investments for health equity across the lifecourse: Scotland versus the rest of the UK', *Social Science and Medicine*, vol. 140, pp. 136-146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.07.007>

### 4. Details of the impact

A strong public engagement and a range of knowledge exchange activities has ensured that Treanor's research influenced public legislation, policy, services and practice.

#### Influencing Scottish government legislation

Treanor's research was instrumental to the strengthening of the Child Poverty Act (Scotland) 2017 by ensuring the inclusion of priority groups and areas such as lone parents, education and income maximisation [5.1; 5.2; 5.3]. Income maximisation comprises benefits advice delivered through statutory services, e.g. health, to ensure everyone is claiming their full entitlement. Treanor's research into 'Healthier Wealthier Children' (HWC), a programme in Glasgow to maximise the income of new parents who may have had no prior entitlement to benefits, and which resulted in cumulative gains in benefit uptake of around GBP32,600,000 from just over 23,000 money advice referrals in the Greater Glasgow area alone, led to the inclusion of income

maximisation in the legislation at the point of pregnancy and childbirth [5.1; 5.2; 5.3]. It also led to the roll out of HWC to the rest of Scotland, an action from the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, seeded by GBP500,000 from the Scottish Government [5.1; 5.2; 5.3]. Treanor's longitudinal qualitative research with families influenced the Scottish Government decision to introduce an income supplement of GBP10 per week per child for low-income families, announced in the 'Tackling child poverty delivery plan 2018-2022', from December 2020 [5.4]. This is expected to reach over 400,000 children in Scotland, lifting 30,000 children out of relative poverty. John Dickie, Director of Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) Scotland writes [5.4]:

*"The experience of parents living in poverty reflected in your research has directly informed CPAG's involvement in the Give Me Five campaign to top-up child benefit in Scotland by £5 a week. Although the Scottish Government has not committed to such a top-up they have committed to introduce an income supplement for low income families by 2022."*

Treanor's research further influenced the inclusion of interim child poverty targets to measure and monitor progress in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act [5.2]. Bruce Adamson, Children & Young People's Commissioner Scotland, says:

*"Her evidence and work with key MSPs during the passage of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill helped to ensure significant amendments at Stage 2, not least around interim targets and income maximisation. This ultimately led to a more ambitious Act."*

Treanor's research on the stigmatising and distressing process in accessing and receiving the Scottish Welfare Fund fundamentally reshaped the Welfare Funds (Scotland) Act 2015, which enshrined in legislation the right of welfare fund applicants to be treated with dignity and respect [5.4]. Up to 30 June 2019, 347,045 individual households received awards totalling GBP209,900,000 from the Scottish Welfare Fund scheme. Ensuring dignity and respect is now enshrined in other Scottish legislation, e.g. the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 [5.4]. John Dickie, Director of CPAG Scotland writes [5.4]:

*"Your research helped to highlight the nature of difficulties faced by families facing income crisis. In particular, the experiences of parents accessing the locally administered Scottish welfare fund. Quotes from your research were included in numerous briefings and consultation responses in relation to the fund, helping to highlight the need for decision makers to treat applicants with dignity and respect. Legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2015 (Welfare Funds (Scotland) Act) enshrined in legislation the right of SWF applicants to be treated with dignity and respect."*

#### Changing authority policy and practice

Edinburgh's schools' poverty-proofing programme, '1 in 5: Raising Awareness of Child Poverty in Edinburgh' prioritises staff training and wider school engagement, e.g. with parents, to ensure that schools develop a sound understanding of the scale, impact and stigmatising myths which surround poverty. Treanor's research was extensively used in the development of the programme and in the training offered to schools [5.5]. As of September 2018, the 1 in 5 training had taken place with staff teams in over 70 schools across Edinburgh. Treanor also helped to create a guide for schools on poverty proofing called the Pupil Equity Framework, which is used by 140+ schools in Edinburgh [5.5]. Treanor's research was synthesised and distributed to local authorities across Scotland as a report to guide action to prevent and mitigate child poverty locally. This has led to systemic and cultural change and enhanced policy and practice for

securing poverty alleviation in local authorities [5.6; 5.7] South Ayrshire council [5.6, 5.6a] has, for example:

- developed a 'Financial Inclusion Pathway' to money advice, which has assisted customers to manage debt totalling GBP1,362,502 and generated GBP3,079,233 in benefit uptake through its welfare and benefits advice (income maximisation). It has also helped customers to appeal against DWP decisions which has generated GBP561,000 for families locally;
- provided 22,752 lunches during school holidays for children in the time frame 2017-19; and
- provided GBP500,000 of free school meals for primary year 1 to primary year 3 in the academic year 2018/2019 of which there was an average uptake of 75%. From April 2019, free school meals are also provided to primary year 4 pupils in targeted primary schools
- provided Breakfast Clubs in local primary schools. In January 2018 it was estimated that a minimum of 614 young people used Breakfast Clubs in South Ayrshire every week, and by August 2018 this figure had risen to over 766, an increase of almost 25%.

#### Implementation of training for practitioners and delivery of professional services

Treanor's engagement with practitioners and professionals has led to changes in professional practice [5.8]. It led to the development of a 'Child poverty, health and wellbeing' eLearning module for use in the initial education of healthcare workers [5.9]. Treanor's involvement encouraged NHS Health Scotland to include education professionals into their work on child poverty. Kerry McKenzie, Organisational Lead – Child Poverty, NHS Health Scotland writes:

*"I have referred to Dr Treanor's papers on financial vulnerability and financial inclusion in our work on financial inclusion in the early years, in particular the role of advice in NHS settings. There is an action in the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plan on supporting the development of financial inclusion referral pathways between the NHS and advice services which is directly linked to this work."* [5.9]

Treanor's research with educational professionals has resulted in a film used by Scotland's largest teaching union, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), to educate teachers on the costs of schooling and the barriers to full participation in education for children and their parents living in poverty. This research directly led to the introduction of a minimum school clothing grant of GBP100.00 for children living in poverty in Scotland [5.4]. John Dickie, Director of CPAG Scotland writes:

*"the film produced in partnership with EIS which was used by CPAG to campaign for a minimum school clothing grant for Scotland in partnership with OPFS and the Poverty Truth Commission. The campaign was successful and the Scottish Government has since gone on to commit to the introduction of a national minimum grant."* [5.4].

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

[5.1] Letter from Member of Scottish Parliament (Scottish Greens), confirming the significance of the HWC programme and the influence of Treanor's research engagement with various stages of legislation and policymaking.

[5.2] Letter from the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People confirming the impact of the research being instrumental to the strengthening of the Child Poverty Act (Scotland) 2017

[5.3] Scottish Parliament Official meeting report, 4 December 2019, p53, notes the impact of Treanor's work on financial vulnerability.

[5.4] Child Poverty Action Group Scotland, Director of Child Poverty. Can corroborate many elements of the case study especially the research resulting in campaigns leading to changes in benefits to children.

[5.5] Letter from Life Long Learning Development Officer, Mental Health & Well Being, City of Edinburgh Council, confirming the research resulting in development of training programmes and frameworks.

[5.6] Summary of actions from South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership, South Ayrshire Council.

[5.6a] Child Poverty Action Plan, South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership, South Ayrshire Council 2019 (pages 7, 12 & 20).

[5.7] Letter from Senior Manager, Planning and Performance East Ayrshire Council confirming development of action plans to address child poverty as a result of the research.

[5.8] Letter from Executive Director, Connect Scotland confirming the influence of the research on approaches to work with families and educators

[5.9] Letter from Organisation Lead, Child Poverty, NHS Health Scotland (now Public Health Scotland) confirming the key contribution the research made to the development of e-learning materials and development of delivery plans.