



27<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Dear Ms Webber,

We are writing to you in your capacity as convenor of the Education, Children and Young People Committee to share the findings of the Cross Party Group on Poverty's inquiry into poverty-related stigma.

Our findings highlight that poverty-related stigma remains extensive and deep-rooted in Scotland. This stigma manifests in several reinforcing ways, impacting people's mental health and wellbeing; erecting barriers to accessing support; and influencing the design and resourcing of policies that can tackle poverty.

Of critical importance to the Committee is the finding that assumptions about people living in poverty is impacting educational attainment in Scotland. Our report highlights that poverty-related stigma causes young people to avoid subjects which incur additional costs; miss extra-curricular activities; stay off school on days that have been designated non-uniform days; and not take the Free School Meals to which they are entitled. In this way, poverty-related stigma often holds children back from fully participating in school with associated social, emotional, and educational impacts.

Overall, the findings of this inquiry highlight that tackling poverty becomes substantially more challenging, if not impossible, if we fail to tackle poverty-related stigma. It is also true that we must tackle stigma if we are to close the poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland.

We urge the Committee to consider the impact of poverty-related stigma throughout your programme of work. In particular, a number of our recommendations have relevance to the work of the Education, Children and Young People Committee:

- Include education about poverty in the national curriculum to prevent and challenge stigma in younger people.
- Provide poverty awareness training to all staff in public facing roles, including teachers, health care professionals, social workers and those administering welfare advice.
- Politicians should consider how they frame their perspectives on social security and poverty in their speeches and other communications.
- Utilise forthcoming work from the University of Strathclyde, University of the West of Scotland, the Poverty Alliance and Mental Health



Foundation to develop a measurement on stigma.

You can access the full report of the inquiry into poverty-related stigma [here](#).

If you would like to discuss this report in more detail, we would be delighted to meet with you at your convenience. In addition, if it would be helpful to provide an update on this work to the Committee, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

Peter Kelly  
Director, The Poverty Alliance  
Secretariat to the CPG on Poverty

Pam Duncan Glancy MSP  
Convenor of the CPG on Poverty