

Child Poverty Fund guidelines

Background

According to the Scottish Government, one in five people in Scotland live in poverty, with one in four children (240 000) living in poverty. 65% of children living in poverty live in working households. Growing up in poverty impacts the health, educational and social well-being of children. Poor performance at school, mental health problems and chronic illness are all higher amongst children in low income households than children from more affluent households.

Justice and compassion are central to the Gospel message. This means that the church needs to engage with the eradication of poverty. On one hand, this means challenging unjust power structures – the prophetic voice speaking truth to power. On the other hand, it means feeding and clothing the hungry and the naked. There are many ways in which this can be done, and we are excited to see the diverse programmes which congregations around Scotland are involved in within their communities which engage with children and families living on the margins of society to challenge the grassroots causes and effects of poverty. This project is about providing assistance to those who are in need; enabling them to access resources and opportunities; and empowering them to use their skills and gifts. It is inviting people to live Jesus' promise: 'I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness' (John 10:10) and bearing witness to that in our mission and ministry.

After a discussion on child poverty at General Synod 2018 there was a clear suggestion that the Scottish Episcopal Church should be proactive and set up its own grant scheme to provide financial assistance for church projects which engage with and address child poverty in Scotland. The SEC has now initiated a programme which will provide grants of up to **£5,000 for a pilot period of 1 year** for congregational programmes specifically focussed on the alleviation of the effects of Child Poverty.

The Fund will be managed through the Church in Society Committee of the SEC, on behalf of the Mission Board

Criteria

There are no set types of programmes which will be funded, as the Committee is interested in attracting a diversity of initiatives.

The Church in Society Committee have set some criteria for selection. These criteria are relevant to all applications and especially if more applications are received than can be funded:

- Identification of a real need in the community
- Probable impact of the programme in directly improving the circumstances of children and families, and/or indirectly through education and campaigning
- Probability of the proposers being able to deliver the work envisaged
- Development of community links, fostering engagement with the broader community

- Must be led by an SEC congregation or diocese
- Partnerships with other churches and/or community groups are encouraged

Monitoring

The development of this programme represents a significant outlay for the SEC, and it is important that the money is well spent. The Church in Society Committee will evaluate the effectiveness and impact of its grants by requiring a report accounting for how the money has been used and discussing the impact of the project on child poverty in the area. Additionally, all of the Child Poverty Fund grant holders will be invited to an annual meeting where the programme and its context are discussed in a forum where we can share and learn from one another.

The outcomes of current grant programmes are reported to General Synod through the publication of short reports made available at Synod and on the SEC website. It is intended to follow this procedure for this new programme. The Church in Society Committee will also work with the project and the SEC Communications team to deliver the stories of the project through channels such as Inspires Online and pisky.scot.