

ENABLE GRANT



Supporting SEC connected projects which work to enable life in all its fullness for children young people and families (John 10:10).

Background

More than one in four (260,000) of Scotland's children are officially recognised as living in poverty. (Source: [Scottish Government](#))

In the absence of significant policy change, this figure is likely to increase in the coming years, with [Scottish Government forecasts](#) indicating that it will reach 38% by 2030/31.

Analysis by the [Resolution Foundation](#) suggests the Scottish child poverty rate will be 29% by 2023-24 - the highest rate in over twenty years.

68% of children in poverty live in working households. (Source: [Scottish Government](#)).

What is child poverty?

Child poverty means growing up in families without the resources to 'obtain the type of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities' which are the norm in 21st century Scotland (Townsend, 1979).

What are the effects of child poverty?

The effects of child poverty should not be underestimated. Experiencing child poverty can undermine the health, wellbeing and educational attainment of children.

We know that:

- Children from higher income families significantly outperform those from low income households at ages 3 and 5. By age 5 there is a gap of ten months in problem solving development and of 13 months in vocabulary (Source: [JRF](#)). The *Growing Up in Scotland* study recently found that there is still a gap in language ability between more and less advantaged children as they reach the last years of primary school. This is the case regardless of whether the gap is measured with respect to family income, area deprivation or the parent's level of education. (Source: [GUS](#))
- Three-year-olds in households with incomes below £10,000 are two-and-a-half times more likely to suffer chronic illness than children in households with incomes above £52,000 (Source: [Donald Hirsch](#))



- There are strong links between the experience of child poverty and poor mental health. Some studies suggest that children living in low-income households are nearly three times more likely to suffer mental health problems than their more affluent peers (Source: [JRF](#); [Audit Scotland](#)).
- Children from lower income households are also more likely than children from more affluent households to experience behavioural and emotional problems. (Source: [University of Edinburgh](#))

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.

The themes of justice and compassion are central to the Gospel message, and this means that the church needs to engage with the eradication of poverty.

On one hand, this sometimes means challenging unjust power structures, speaking with a prophetic voice, speaking truth to power, and standing alongside the vulnerable and marginalised. On the other hand, it also means affording dignity to fellow human beings by filling unmet basic needs - 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 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 discussion at General Synod 2018 there was a clear intention 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 one year. (Groups may apply for funding for the same project year on year, but this cannot be guaranteed as the Enable Grants budget is delegated annually).

As part of an attempt increase the scope and number of applications made to this funding stream, the name of the grant was changed from Child Poverty Grant to Enable Grant at a meeting of the Mission Board in April 2023. The Fund will be managed through the Church in Society Committee, on behalf of the Mission Board.

