



ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY GROUP

WHO ARE WE?

The Anti-Poverty Strategy Group is comprised of former members of the Anti-Poverty Co-Design Group, which was formed in January 2021 by the Minister for Communities. Its purpose was to work with the Department of Communities to co-design an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Building on the work of an Expert Advisory Panel, the Co-Design Group collaborated with officials from the Department of Communities throughout 2021. In 2022, the group decided to create its own paper of recommendations. This paper, which contained a comprehensive, evidence-based set of recommendations, was published in September 2022 and presented to the Minister for Communities. The group has since revised the paper to ensure it remains relevant in the current societal, political, and economic climate.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR AN ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY

- An **overarching, comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy** based on **objective need** which is **evidence based** and takes a **rights-based approach**.
- The strategy should have **clear, timebound targets** and **build upon the detailed**
- work that has been carried out to date** in order to ensure expedient delivery and implementation of actions.
- The vision for an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland should be the **eradication of poverty**. It is unacceptable that one person lives in poverty, or that one child grows up in poverty, so anything less than the goal of eradication will be unacceptable.
- A **lifecycle approach**, with additional themes of **place-based interventions**, and address cross-cutting issues, such as **housing, employment inclusion and access to services**.
- The Strategy should be **fully resourced**.
- **Cross-departmental responsibility, delivery and accountability** should be a key feature of the strategy. The Strategy should cover and interconnect Executive policy on addressing poverty.
- **Cross-sectoral** development and implementation.
- Incorporate the experience and expertise of **people with lived experience**. Understanding the lived experience of poverty through an **intersectional lens** is critical to designing effective, inclusive responses to poverty.

VISION, OUTCOMES & CALLS

Strategic Vision

“Northern Ireland is an equal society where poverty and its impacts are eradicated, and that respects, protects, promotes and fulfils the rights of those at risk of poverty to ensure they achieve their aspirations.”

Outcome 1

The creation of an Anti-Poverty Act which will ensure that the rights of people experiencing or at risk of poverty are promoted, protected, and realised.

- 1.1 Creation of an Anti-Poverty Act containing statutory commitments and objective measures to eradicate poverty over twenty years
- 1.2 Commitment to an Anti-Poverty Strategy with clear, time-bound targets for the reduction of poverty by fifty percent over ten years.
- 1.3 Creation of an independent Anti-Poverty Commission to monitor and promote the eradication of poverty and income inequality.

Outcome 2

Working towards eradication by 2045, child poverty will be reduced by half over the lifetime of this Strategy.

- 2.1 Introduce a new weekly Child Payment to all children in poverty.
- 2.2 Restore the value of key social security benefits for children to levels prior to austerity cuts.
- 2.3 Reduce family outgoings, and make education cost-free.
- 2.4 Deliver a new Executive Early Education and Childcare Strategy, targeting families in poverty, which will provide accessible, affordable, high quality, flexible and sustainable childcare.
- 2.5 Provide targeted interventions for children with specific additional vulnerabilities.

Outcome 3

No working age person shall live in poverty, regardless of whether they are in work, seeking work or unable to work. All those of working age will have sufficient income to participate fully in society and can access services and pathways to sustained and meaningful employment.

- 3.1 Address low pay and precarious work, reducing poverty and the risk of poverty.
- 3.2 Ensure people do not live in poverty through a robust, transparent and human rights-based benefits and social security system.

Outcome 4

Working towards eradication by 2045, poverty among older people will be reduced by half over the lifetime of this Strategy. Older people experiencing or at risk of poverty will have adequate income and support in relation to their economic, physical, and mental wellbeing to ensure their equal participation in society.

- 4.1 Press UK government to maintain and improve financial support: protect social welfare benefits; protect the Triple Lock; and review the adequacy of State Pension.
- 4.2 The NI Executive should ensure addressing poverty in later life is identified as a priority in the Programme for Government and associated delivery plans and actions, in the context of planning for an ageing population.
- 4.3 Maximise and improve older people's access to benefits, advice, and support.
- 4.4 Address financial disadvantage and material deprivation experienced by older people.
- 4.5 Support measures for older people of 'working age'.
- 4.6 Improved data collection and research on poverty and older people.

Outcome 5

We have attractive, safe, accessible, welcoming, and sustainable environments in the most deprived areas.

- 5.1 Investment is required for the 20% most multi-deprived communities to move people and communities out of poverty.
- 5.2 Addressing and delivering on Regional Balance.
- 5.3 Communities must be part of the decision-making process to break the cycle of poverty.
- 5.4 Investment in Community Wealth Building.

Outcome 6

All people experiencing or at risk of poverty have equal access to high quality public services that meet their needs in a timely manner and are based on dignity, fairness, and respect.

- 6A. Housing provision and support
- 6B. Access to online services and transport
- 6C. Access to independent advice services and justice
- 6D. Actions to tackle specific types of poverty