

**Scottish Campaign  
on Welfare Reform**

**SCoWR**



*A Scottish voice  
for issues on  
Welfare Reform*

## What is SCoWR?

Established in 2006, the Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform (SCoWR) is a broad coalition of Scottish organisations working with people experiencing exclusion and poverty in Scotland. SCoWR currently has over forty members including the Scottish Women's Convention, Shelter, the Salvation Army, Citizens Advice Scotland, Oxfam, Child Poverty Action Group, the Scottish Trades Union Congress, Barnados and the Scottish Association for Mental Health. All members share common concerns about the UK Government's ongoing proposals for welfare reform.

## SCoWR Aims

SCoWR calls for a welfare system that is:

- **Dignified** – treating citizens with respect and compassion, valuing unpaid work and caring roles and recognising the responsibilities of employers and government as well as the public benefits of welfare
- **Supportive** – lifting people well out of poverty, so that everyone is financially protected, whatever their circumstances
- **Well resourced** – providing adequate financial and human resources to ensure the smooth introduction of any reforms
- **Suitable** – taking full account of Scotland's differing institutional framework from the outset, so that any proposals enable a joined up approach to tackling poverty across the whole of the UK.

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## SCoWR Activity

SCoWR has undertaken a variety of different campaigning activities, including:

- A postcard campaign targeted at MPs
- Issuing letters to all Scottish MPs and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions outlining our key concerns
- Supporting amendments to the Welfare Reform Bills in 2006 and 2009
- Issuing joint briefings and consultation responses.



## SCoWR's Key Concerns

SCoWR is not opposed to welfare reform itself – and would, in fact welcome reform of many elements of the welfare state – however we have grave concerns about the specific nature of many of the current welfare reform proposals. In particular:

- **Increasing conditionality:** means claimants must meet more conditions in order to claim benefit entitlement. The UK Government continues to focus almost exclusively on the responsibilities of individuals and not of Government and employers in helping people from welfare to work
- **Benefits rates:** Existing levels of benefit provision are inadequate, meaning that thousands of people in the UK struggle to get by on poverty level incomes. SCoWR is concerned that the current proposals make no mention of benefit rates and believes that, until this issue is tackled explicitly, welfare reforms will continue to leave people financially unsupported
- **Adequate funding:** SCoWR is concerned that both existing services and the new proposals are significantly under-resourced, with demand far outstripping available funds. It is claimants and their families who will continue to bear the brunt of this in terms of insufficient support and declining customer service
- **Scottish issues:** The proposals do not fully take into account devolved aspects of welfare reform, such as the key policy areas of childcare provision and skills development, as well as the different demographics of Scotland.

## How can you help?

If you have concerns about the direction in which the welfare state is being reformed, please consider joining SCoWR. To show your support, get involved and receive e-mail updates of our work, please complete the details below and send to:

SCoWR c/o  
POVERTY ALLIANCE  
162 BUCHANAN STREET  
GLASGOW  
G1 2LL

Alternatively, you can email your details to [admin@povertyalliance.org.uk](mailto:admin@povertyalliance.org.uk)

I AM JOINING AS:

An Individual

On behalf of an organisation

NAME

JOB TITLE

*(if joining on behalf of an organisation)*

ORGANISATION

*(if joining on behalf of an organisation)*

ADDRESS

EMAIL

TELEPHONE