



**CHILD
POVERTY
ACTION
GROUP**
IN SCOTLAND

**EARLY
WARNING
SYSTEM**



Gathering evidence about the impacts of welfare reform on children and their families and influencing change.

WHAT IS THE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM?



A lone parent with four children had to attend a foodbank and had a major loss of income over the Christmas period because she was sanctioned for failing to attend a work programme appointment because one of her children was rushed to hospital. It took two months to get the sanction lifted.

The Early Warning System (EWS) gathers information and case studies about the impact of welfare reform on children and families across Scotland.

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland set up the Early Warning System, which is funded by the Children, Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund managed on behalf of the Scottish Government by Lloyds TSB, to help us to get a better understanding of how changes to the benefit system like the introduction of universal credit, the benefit cap and changes to tax credit entitlement will affect the lives of children and their families.

We are collecting information and anonymous case studies from:

- Frontline workers including welfare rights workers, housing officers and Early Years staff. Frontline workers submit evidence using our online case study collection system.
- CPAG in Scotland's second tier advice line for frontline advisers and support workers.
- Research following 12 low income families over a number of years.

WHAT WE DO WITH THE INFORMATION GATHERED

Information gathered through the Early Warning System has been used to inform:

- Resources including a booklet about welfare reform for Early Years professionals detailing practical steps that can be undertaken to assist families affected by welfare reform, and information for midwives about reducing poverty before and after birth.
- A training course on child poverty and welfare reform aimed at professionals working in Early Years.
- A quarterly update of findings.
- CPAG in Scotland's and CPAG UK's responses to consultations and calls for evidence.
- Reports to DWP detailing administrative issues. Policy seminars on emerging issues from the Early Warning System with a focus on identifying policies and practice that will continue to contribute to the delivery of better outcomes for children in Scotland in the face of falling incomes.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

If you or any of your colleagues work with families who have been affected by changes to the benefit system, and you think that someone needs to know about their experience, then you might want to get involved.

By signing up to the project you would be committing to tell us about some of the cases you come across. Once you are signed up to the system you can enter your case studies on to our easy to use, online system. You will be given your own login details and will be able to keep the identity of the family completely anonymous.

In return you will receive:

- Updates about the findings from the Early Warning System
- Details about how the case studies have been used
- Information about any changes that have arisen as a result of the Early Warning System

Above all you will know that you are contributing to the development of policies and planning decisions which could make a big difference to lives and families you work with.



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I'll be taking back all the learning to my organisation and sharing this with colleagues

CONTACT US

If you would be interested in submitting case studies or have any queries about the Early Warning System please get in touch with:

Kirsty McKechnie

(Welfare Rights Officer)

Tel: 0141 611 7091

Email: kmckechnie@cpagscotland.org.uk

If you would like to discuss policy issues arising from the Early Warning System, please contact:

Hanna McCulloch

(Policy and Parliamentary Officer)

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