aberlour
scotland's children's charity

Debt, Destitution and Cash First: Rethinking Public Debt

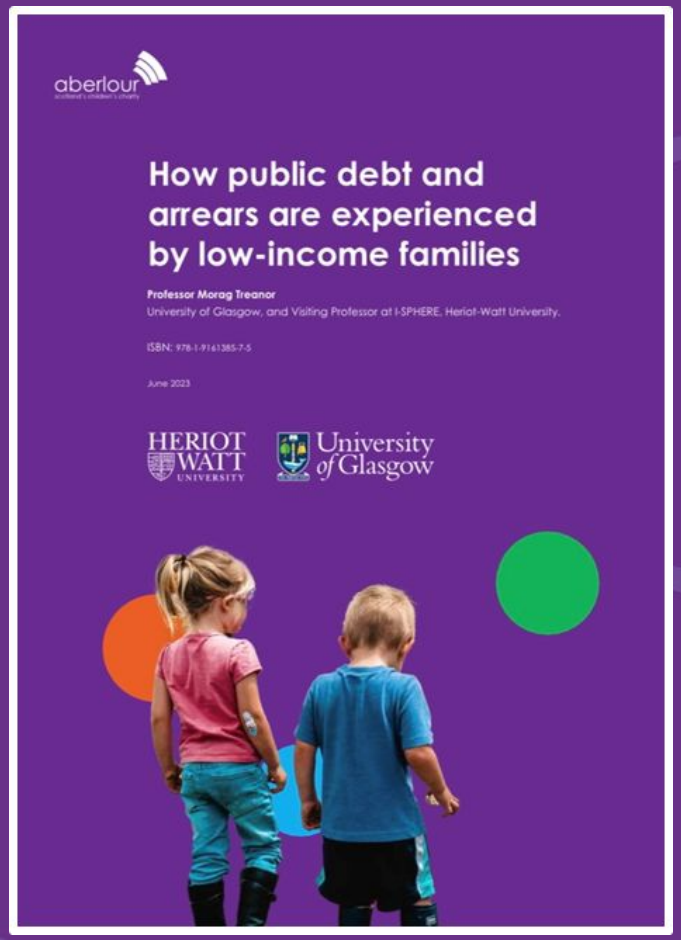
Martin Canavan
Head of Policy & Influencing
Robyn Moffat-Wall
Senior Policy Lead



aberlour
scotland's children's charity

"Public debt pulls families deeper into poverty and holds them there"

Professor Morag Treanor



https://www.aberlour.org.uk/news-item/new-report-highlights-public-debt-pulls-families-further-into-poverty

Public Debt

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

Local

- Council Tax Arrears
- Rent Arrears
- School Meal Debt

Scotland

- Scottish Social Security Overpayments

UK

- DWP Overpayments
- Sanctions
- Loans

Public Debt Research

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

- What is the extent of public debt for low income families in Scotland?
- How does public debt impact on low income families?
- What can we do to tackle public debt?

Aberlour Urgent Assistance Fund

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

- Issued **£3,952,892** in cash first grants since 2021
- Supporting **12,000 families** and **21,000 children**
- **1 in 3** applications related to food insecurity


He was grateful to Aberlour and Welfare Rights who saw the bigger picture.

Research Published

- Nearly **£1 billion** will be lost by low-income households in Scotland over the next Parliamentary term due to Universal Credit deductions
- **55%** of families (approximately 80,000) with children receiving Universal Credit in Scotland have public debt
- Families with children receiving Universal Credit in Scotland see their incomes reduced by nearly **£1,000** annually due to deductions

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

University of Glasgow
VIA VERITAS VITA

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

Trussell
Ending hunger together

One Parent Families Scotland
changing lives, challenging poverty

Research Published

- In 2023 alone, **30,000 children** in Scotland and their families had school meal debt
- Nearly **1 in 6** families supported through Aberlour Children Charity's Urgent Assistance Fund required help with unsustainable public debt
- Around **half** of the total amount of debt owed by people seeking help from debt advice services is public debt

University of Glasgow

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

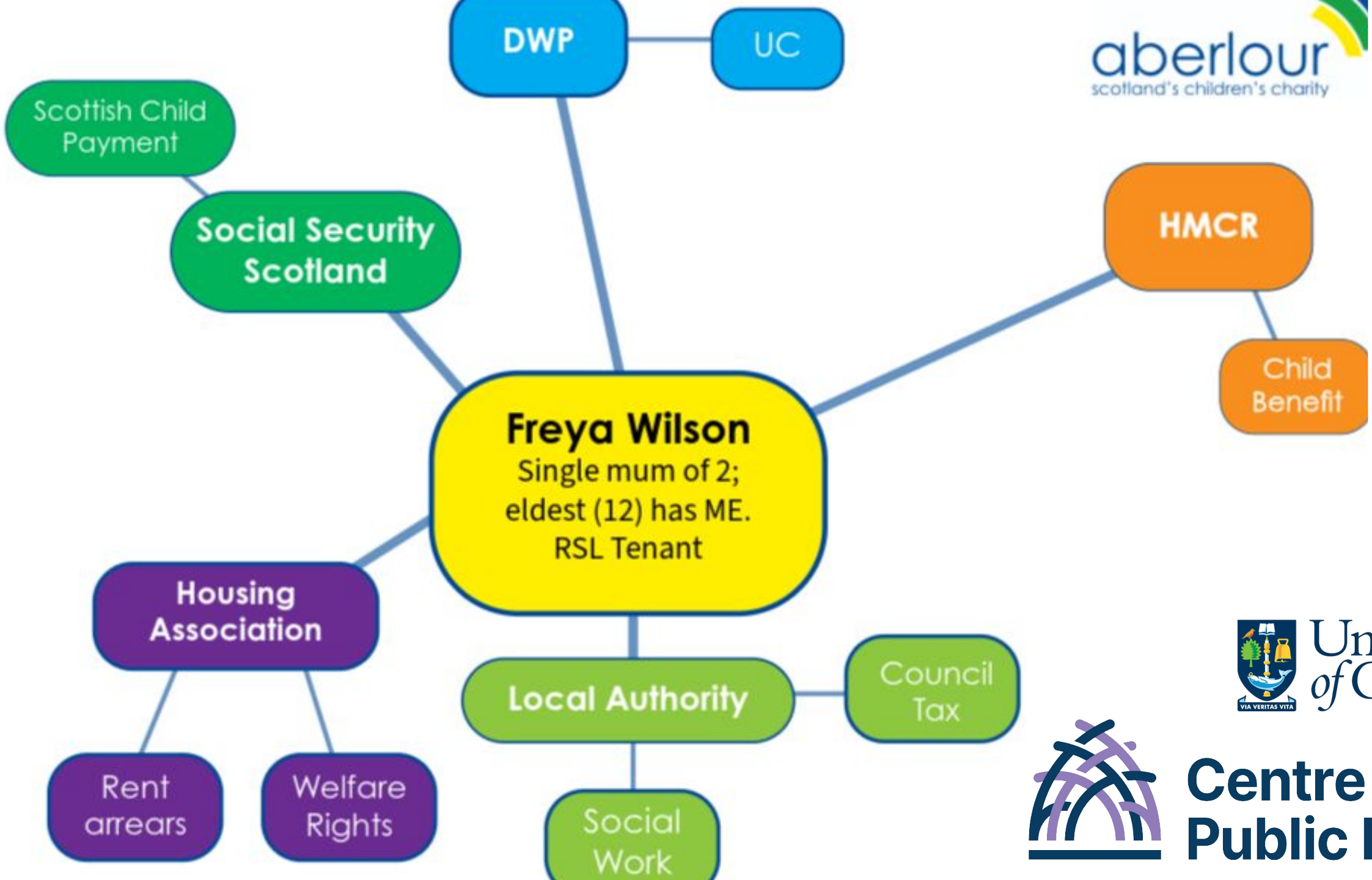
Trussell
Ending hunger together

One Parent Families Scotland
changing lives, challenging poverty

Child Poverty & Public Debt

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

- Public debt intensifies and sustains child poverty.
- The systems put in place to recover public debt often have the effect of pushing families with children further and deeper into poverty.
- Public debt is felt most sharply by families on the lowest incomes and too often traps families in poverty.
- Inextricable link between women's poverty and child poverty – there is a clear gendered impact of public debt



aberlour
scotland's children's charity

University of Glasg

Centre for Public Polic

What families need help with



Tackling the Public Debt Crisis

aberlour
scotland's children's charity

- Public Sector Debt Bill – incl specific protections for families with children and victim-survivors of domestic abuse

- National policy to tackle public debt aligned with existing and future anti-poverty work - incl public debt data in national and local child poverty strategies and other policy areas (housing, disability, domestic abuse and public sector reform)

- LAs to do debt recovery differently (there are some that already doing so!). A holistic approach to better connect their workforce to; help meet the needs of their



aberlour
scotland's children's charity

Contact:

Martin.Canavan@aberlour.org.uk

linkedin.com/company/aberlourcc

@aberlourcharity.bsky.social

aberlour.org.uk

Registered Head Office: Kintail House, Forthside Way, Stirling, FK8 1QZ

Scottish Charity no: SCO07991 | Company Reg no: SC312912