SHRC
Scottish
Human Rights
Commission

Richard Bell
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Dear Councillor Richard Bell,

Poverty Spotlight: Food, Health, and Participation in Castlemilk

As part of our spotlight focus on poverty in Scotland, the Scottish Human Rights Commission is currently undertaking a review of the human rights issues relating to access to food.

The SHRC is concerned about access to food across Scotland. Our recent monitoring report on economic, social, and cultural rights (ESC Rights) in the South of Scotland found that minimum core human rights obligations in relation to access to food in the area are not consistently being met. We found similar challenges in our 2024 monitoring of rights in the Highlands and Islands. We have also highlighted in our recent Poverty Spotlight report that failures to realise ESC rights such as access to food are both a cause and a consequence of poverty. Our work in this area has also led us to be aware of specific concerns raised by residents of Castlemilk in Glasgow.

Members of the Commission have met on a number of occasions with residents who have been campaigning for more than ten years for a local supermarket to be built from which they can purchase healthy and affordable food locally. Despite residents'

consistent efforts and a funding award in 2022 from the Scottish Government via the Place Based Improvement Fund to Glasgow City Council for this purpose, there is still no supermarket available. The impact of this is that many residents have reported to us that are now relying on the local community run food pantry to access affordable food.

A lack of available, accessible, adequate, and quality food represents a risk to a number of human rights including:

- The Adequate Standard of Living (Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR))
- The highest attainable standard of health (Article 12 ICESCR).

The Castlemilk Housing and Human Rights Lived Experience Board in 2025 raised these issues to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Geneva, three years after Castlemilk was promised a new supermarket through funding from Glasgow City Council.

The SHRC recommends that a human rights budgeting approach requires appropriate public participation, and scrutiny of public sector resource allocation to ensure it is delivering outcomes which respect, protect and fulfil people's human rights. I would be grateful to understand if this is an element which has been considered in your monitoring of the impact of the Scottish Government's funding award to Glasgow City Council, via the Place Based Improvement Fund in Castlemilk. Duty bearers have an obligation to ensure that public resources are maximised to support the progressive realisation of rights, and so measures should be in place to ensure that human rights compliance informs decision making in public finance at Glasgow City Council.

We are currently conducting work to further explore the issue of food poverty more generally. We plan to complete this work in early 2027 and will share this with you once it is published. In the meantime, I look forward to hearing from you in relation to the matter raised above.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Angela O'Hagan
Chair of The Scottish Human Rights Commission.