

**Professor John H. McKendrick**

**Access beyond elites**



*Access, LLL and Education for All  
Symposium to celebrate an academic-life well lived  
6 October, 2023*

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# Fond memories and parallel paths

# On Jim Gallacher

- Met Jim several times, often in company of Gill Scott
- Charting parallel paths
  - Career track academic with a commitment to WA / LLL
  - Authentic concern with “impact”
  - Genuine belief in the value of FE/HE/CE
  - Roles in Scottish policy promoting WA/LLL
  - Aspire to qualities Terry and Michael referred to in Obituaries
- Learn things too late
  - Dennistoun versus Carntyne/Tollcross
  - Love of the outdoors
  - Love of chocolate
  - Dislike Greenock Morton



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**From where I view the world**



University for the Common Good



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# Commissioner for Fair Access

Current role holder: **Professor John McKendrick**



Professor John McKendrick was appointed Commissioner for Fair Access in January 2023.

## Responsibilities

### Responsibilities and functions

The Commissioner is independent of government and responsible for leading a system wide effort to deliver fair access in Scotland, including the development of a [framework for fair access](#).

He provides impartial policy advice to the Scottish Government and other organisations and works across the entire education system to:

- develop best practice
- improve the evidence base
- hold to account all those with a role in advancing fair access to higher education

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## Contact

### Address

Commissioner for Fair Access  
7th Floor Atlantic Quay  
Scottish Government  
150 Broomielaw  
Glasgow  
G2 8LU

Tel: 0300 244 1338



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**How I come to view the world**

# Social mobility but not as we know it



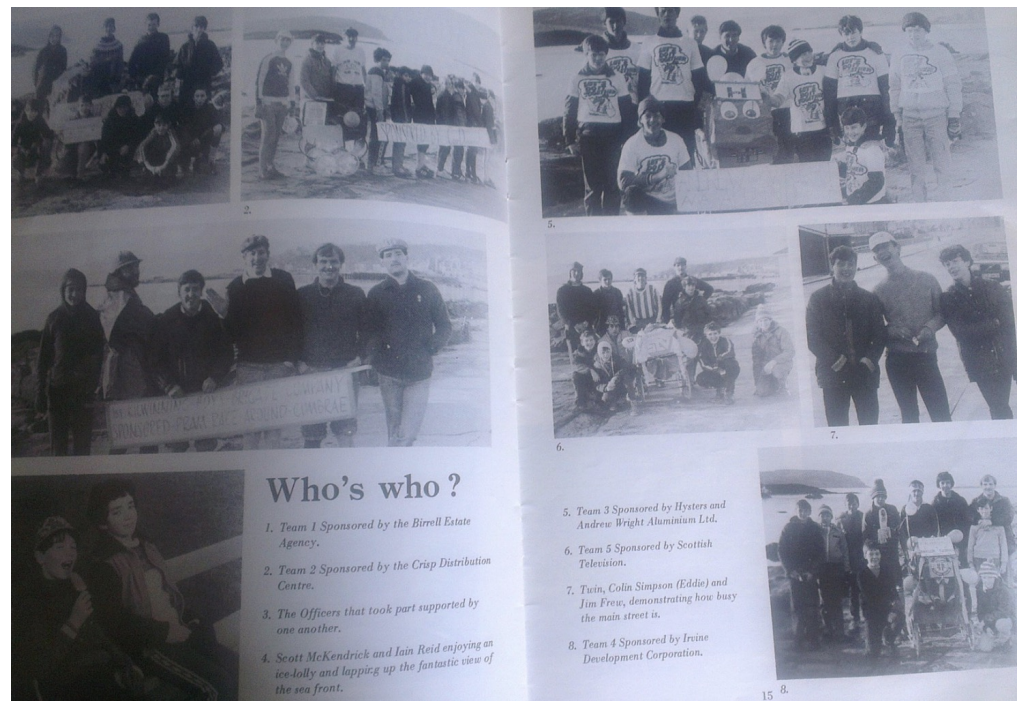


# Spam valley and home





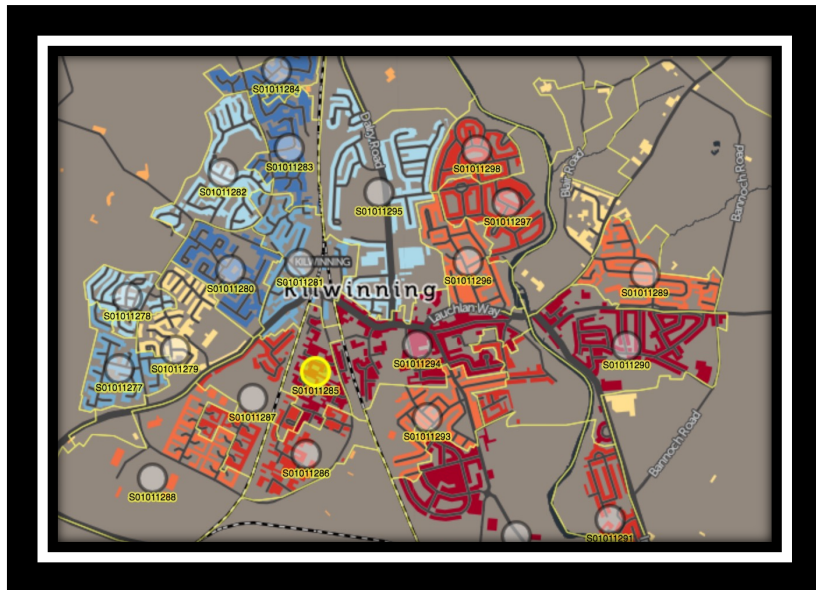
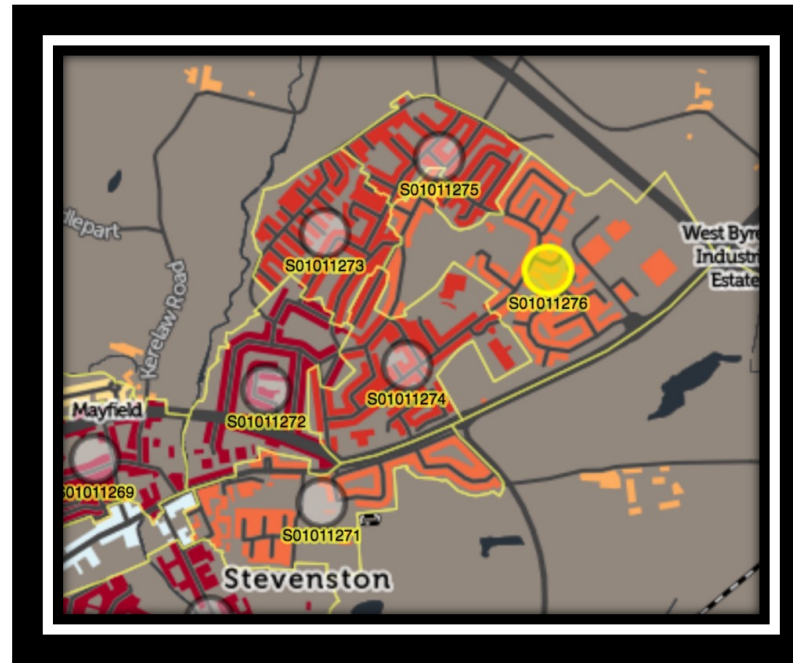
# Role models and heroes



# Parenting that promotes independence









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# My core arguments (on poverty and widening access)

All roads lead to

2030

- Child Poverty
- Poverty-related attainment gap
  - Fair access



# Vision of the optimist

Poverty / Narrow range of access is an inevitable (but unproblematic) social ill

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Poor / uneducated people are to blame

**Our anti-poverty interventions have not been sufficiently effective to tackle poverty / HEI access in Scotland**

Vested interests create and maintain poverty / limited access





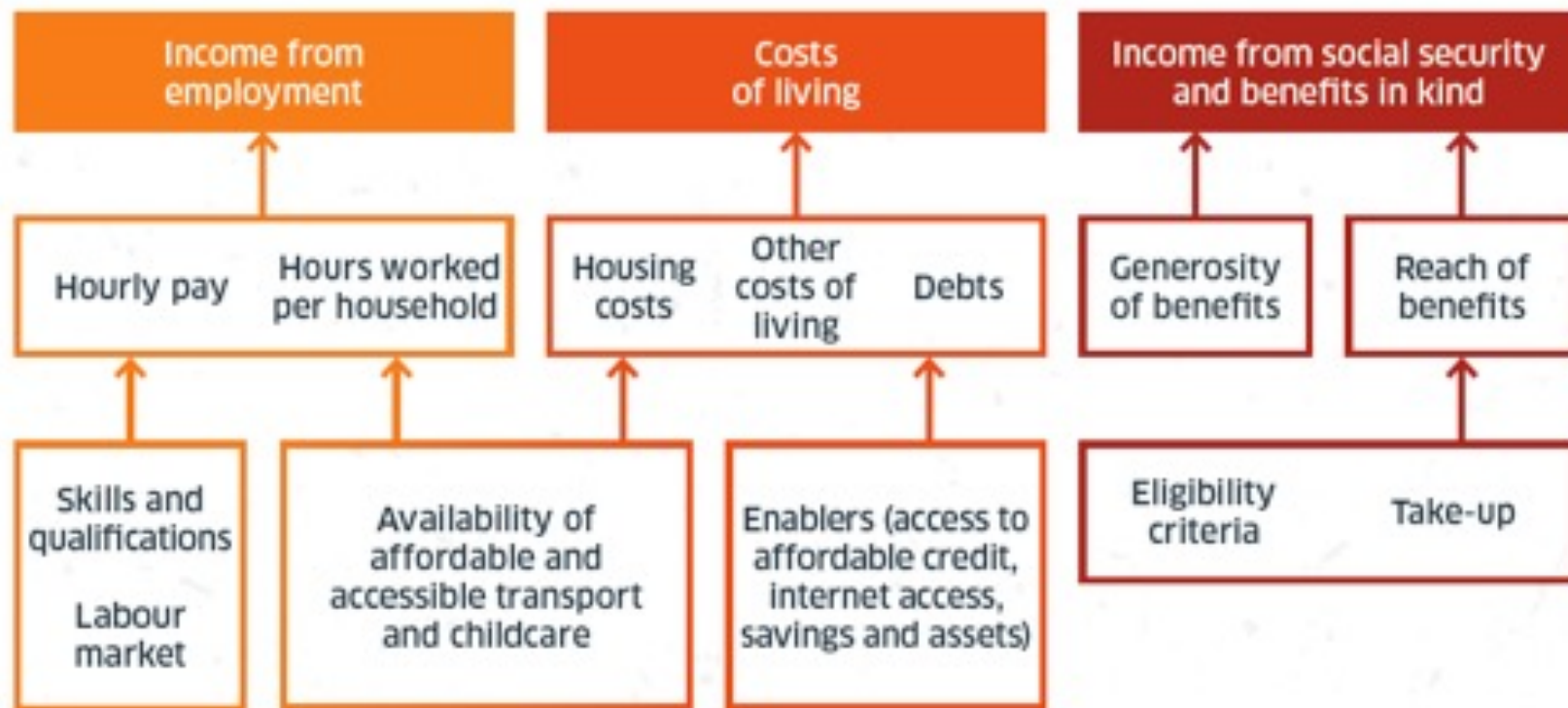
# Education and Poverty

- Fair access to HE is a whole-system issue
- If fair access to HE is *the* goal then that only reinforces social inequality
- Education should not be allowed to be a vehicle to reinforce social inequality
- Education cannot solve poverty, but education must contribute effectively to whole-system efforts to tackle poverty



# An awkward positioning – is education in the mix?

## CHILD POVERTY MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK



# Communities of interest

**THE COST OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP IN SCOTLAND

PLP

Glasgow Centre for Population Health

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

Scotland's largest and most effective education trade union **eis**

**FACE UP TO CHILD POVERTY**



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**On leadership**

# Everyday leadership

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and also

[http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/scottish\\_football\\_referees.cfm?page=720&startrow=19&currentPage=4](http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/scottish_football_referees.cfm?page=720&startrow=19&currentPage=4)

PLEASE NOTE that I work a pattern of condensed hours and I spend my Fridays with Morven, my youngest daughter!



# Alliance of Working- Class Academics

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**Workingclassacademics.com**  
@AWCAcademics

## Our Aims:

Help academic colleagues overcome class-based barriers throughout their careers

Amass data on the economic, social, and cultural challenges facing working class academics

Mentor and support working class students

Develop best practices on recruiting, retaining, and meaningfully advocating on behalf of working-class faculty, staff, and students



The Dignity and Value of Working-Class Histories and Experiences



Working Class Heritages Within Intersectional Equal Opportunity



Recruitment, Retention, and Promotions of Working-Class Heritage Staff



Access, Admission, Retention, Full Participation and Achievements of Working-Class Heritage Students

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***Fair access?***

# The terms of the debate

- Beyond access
  - Getting in
  - Thriving
  - What lies ahead
- Beyond the passport / paper
  - Learning (skills/knowledge)
  - Educational experience
  - Life experience





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# Approaching fair access

# Philosophies of widening access

- Be like us ... today
- Be like us ... tomorrow
- Help us re-envisage our collective endeavour



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**Some priority issues**

# Issues to consider

- A mixed up kid?
  - Equity is not the goal, but neither it is only about letting many flowers bloom
- We need to talk money ... soon
- What do we want a university to be
- Specify and deliver on minimum offers
- Metrics that matter



**Thank you for listening.**

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