

## ***Everyone benefits in a society of more equal opportunity.***

Child poverty locally and across NI was the subject for the Soroptimist club at the second meeting of the 2017 -18 programme. The guest speaker was Goretti Horgan, lecturer at Ulster University. Prior to the talk members had the opportunity to enjoy a meal together at the White Horse Hotel.

Goretti emphasised that poverty here should be measured in the context of the average lifestyle where we live. It is easy to see poverty in the light of harrowing pictures on T.V and conclude that nobody suffers from poverty in our part of the world. Yet the child who plays in a friends warm home and returns to a cold house or the mother who does without a meal to make sure that her children are fed are indeed living in poverty.

Poverty is a measurement of needs not wants. A home without internet makes homework or job applications etc. more difficult.

A Northern Ireland study showed that 35% of adults are deprived of one necessity. 1 in 10 homes are not heated enough to prevent damp. In Great Britain 4% of children grow up in persistent poverty.

In Northern Ireland this figure is 22%. Persistent poverty leaves no reserves for such events as a school trip or a broken washing machine.

The Lack of adequately paid jobs means families being poor. Goretti gave the example of a certain employer being popular because he always paid the living wage!

Goretti wound up this challenging talk by drawing the Soroptimist's attention to the lack of a childcare strategy here in NI and quoting from the Lifestyle Study that poverty affects us all due to the correlation between lack of money, poor physical & mental health and of course crime.

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