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The SNP has finally u-turned on its objection to creating a new anti-poverty group that would be directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament.

Earlier this year, the nationalists rejected calls by the Scottish Conservatives for a Poverty and Inequality Commission to be established, which would report directly to MSPs at Holyrood.

Instead, they attempted to create their own anti-poverty body which would have had no accountability to MSPs.

However, it has now been agreed the new commission first suggested by shadow social security secretary Adam Tomkins will come into effect from 2019.

The SNP had argued creating such a body would not prove “value for money” and would have “too much downtime”.

But opposition parties backed the idea, as did dozens of anti-poverty charities and organisations.

The necessary changes are expected to be made to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill at stage three when it is voted on next week.

Scottish Conservative shadow social security secretary Adam Tomkins said:

“I’m glad the SNP has finally seen sense on this issue.

“Tackling poverty is one of the Scottish Parliament’s greatest priorities, which is why it’s so important to have a commission directly accountable to it.

“The SNP might like to talk a good game on poverty, but when it comes to action it is too often found wanting.

“Quite why the nationalists dug their heels in on this matter for so long is a mystery.

“Now the u-turn has been performed, it means the Scottish Parliament can hold this commission to account to ensure the right work is being done and targets are being hit.”