

Minimum Income Guarantee Expert Group Interim Report

Easy Read Version



March 2023

Introduction



The Scottish Government asked organisations to tell them what they should do to make sure people have enough money to be happy and healthy. This report was written by the group of organisations.



We think everyone should have enough money to be happy and healthy and the Scottish Government should make sure this happens. We call this a Minimum Income Guarantee.



We are still deciding what a Minimum Income Guarantee could look like and how we could introduce this in Scotland. This report says what we do know so far and what we need to know before making decisions.

What we know so far



We have seen lots of change and big events happen in Scotland that show there is not enough support for people that do not have the amount of money needed to be happy and healthy. The COVID-19 pandemic is an example.



The Scottish Government and UK Government should do more to help people that do not have enough money, lose their jobs, get sick or are treated unfairly because of who they are.



Some people or families need more money to be happy and healthy, this might be because they have a bigger family or have to pay more for the things they need, for example heating.



Disable people, single parents, women and people of colour are some of the groups more likely to be living in poverty. Poverty means not having enough money to pay for basic things like food or housing.

We think everyone living in Scotland should:



- have enough money to buy food, live in a safe home, pay for heating and anything else that is important



- get money or other support to make sure they can live well if they do not have enough



- be able to work in a job they like and be paid fairly



- have access to services that help them live well, work and feel safe (for example, free healthcare or cheaper childcare)



- be treated the same as everyone else, have access to support and an equal opportunity to live a healthy and happy life



- be able to get help easily if they need it

What we recommend



1. The Scottish Government should think about the powers the Scottish Parliament will need to deliver new benefits or pilot a Minimum Income Guarantee.



2. The Scottish Government should change the Scottish Child Payment so it is not tied to a UK Government qualifying benefit.



3. The Scottish Government should promise a Minimum Income Guarantee system will not have unfair conditions and sanctions. Conditions mean people must behave in a certain way to get support. Sanctions reduce, pause or end support if the conditions are not met.



4. The Scottish Government should promise that benefits will not take a long time to receive, be paused or limited. This negatively impacts different groups, such as single parents, people of colour, disabled people and women more than others.



5. The Scottish Government should think about how they can do more to help parents with childcare costs.



6. The Scottish Government should look at council tax reductions and water rates discounts for people that don't have much money.



7. The Scottish Government should make sure more people get the help they qualify for and link national and local social security systems.



8. The Scottish Government should check if disability assistance is enough to help disabled people with the extra costs of being disabled.



9. The Scottish Government should promote the living wage and make sure all public sector workers get this. The living wage is the amount of money people need to make at work to buy the things they need.

What we plan to do

We will:



Keep researching a Minimum Income Guarantee so we can make decisions and have a clear understanding of how we can introduce this in Scotland.



Speak to different people about what they need, especially groups that have protected characteristics. Protected characteristics are things such as age, disability, race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment or religion or belief.



See what powers the Scottish Parliament has to make changes to work, social security, equality, tax and any other part of a Minimum Income Guarantee. Scotland is a devolved country which means it can make some decisions alone but others need to be made by the UK Government.



Find a better way to share information so that people know what help they can get and make applying for benefits easier.



Look at help that is currently available to see if that can be made better.



Look at how we can help people find a job that they like and that uses their skills. This work must pay fairly and be flexible.



See how the labour market could change to make jobs flexible, accessible, secure and pay fairly.



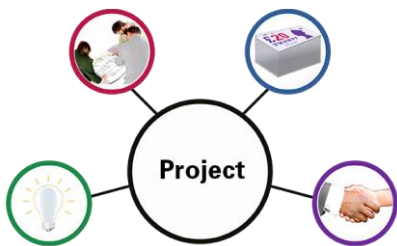
Think about how we support people that are in unpaid work like caring for someone with a disability.



Find out how much a Minimum Income Guarantee would cost to introduce and how the Scottish Government would pay for it.



Ask people in Scotland if they think a Minimum Income Guarantee is a good idea.



Decide how we can pilot a Minimum Income Guarantee. A pilot is a way to test an idea before it is available to everyone across Scotland.



Publish a second report in 2024 that will share more information about a Minimum Income Guarantee.

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