



Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement 2024-25



Foreword

‘Equality, opportunity, community: New leadership - A fresh start’ published in April 2023 makes clear that the First Minister has committed his Government to ‘embedding equality, inclusion and human rights into everything we do’. This ‘Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement’ does just that: it is not simply an analysis of the Budget and the impact of the decisions contained in it, it considers the process of making those decisions, and how we make sure the needs of all people are actively considered.

The ‘Scottish Budget 2024-25’ comes in one of the most difficult periods for public finances since devolution, following an ‘Autumn Statement’ by the UK Government which prioritised tax cuts to the detriment of public service investment. The Scottish Budget 2024-25, however, is the budget of a responsible government - taking tough decisions to protect the public from the worst effects of UK Government austerity.

This Budget has required each Cabinet Secretary to make choices about how to spend the funding available to them – and where not to spend it. In doing this, we have all been mindful that our decisions can have a disproportionate impact on poorer communities and those most marginalised, and we have sought to deploy budgets in a way which improves and advances equality. The evidence we have gathered to develop this Statement not only shows the Equality and Fairer Scotland impacts of our spending but actively informed our decisions.

We remain committed to ensuring that equality and human rights underpin our budget processes and are working to continually improve how we do this. This year the [Scottish Government responded](#) to recommendations made by the Equality and Human Rights Budget Advisory Group and we have committed to working in partnership with them to deliver an action plan over the forthcoming year. As a result of their input, and an internal review, we have made a number of improvements to the process for delivering the ‘Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement (EFSBS)’ this year.

For the first time, Ministers came together to discuss collectively the equality and socioeconomic impacts of budget decisions at an EFSBS specific workshop. This collective discussion was an important step change in how we embed equality and human rights in budget decision making emphasising the importance we place on that.

Another key improvement this year is the alignment of the 'Programme for Government' and budget equality assurance process.

A further addition this year is the 'Case Study' approach. We have used a sample of eight budget lines as case studies and these are outlined in this Statement. They come from different parts of Government, and include different types of budget. For each of the eight case studies, we have looked in detail at how human rights and equality considerations have played a part in decision making. To do this, we have answered six key questions, which were developed in collaboration with the Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group.

In the autumn, we also commissioned the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to undertake an intersectional gender budget pilot on our behalf. This work has recently started and will include capacity building and exploring practical opportunities to pilot new approaches on gender budgeting.

Over the coming year we will go further. We will continue working with the Equality and Human Rights Budget Advisory Group on our action plan, and will learn from international practice, as we work with the OECD and our stakeholders.

As we enter some of the toughest times for public services in recent history, we will make evidence-based decisions that consider the impacts on all people in Scotland. The challenges are huge, so it is vital that we work together to protect those who are most vulnerable.



Shona Robison
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet
Secretary for Finance



Shirley-Anne Somerville
Cabinet Secretary for Social
Justice

Executive Summary of EFSBS

Context

The Scottish Budget in 2024-25 is £59.7 billion (including annually managed expenditure). Most of this funding is provided to public bodies, with health and local government being the two largest areas of spend.

The cost of living crisis presents serious economic and social challenges for Scotland and the UK in 2024-25, and we know it is affecting particular households, services and sectors of the economy very differently. The Scottish Government has made a positive choice in this [Budget](#) to tackle poverty and inequality. An additional £1 billion will be invested in Social Security in 2024-25, bringing the total we will invest to around £6.3 billion.

Published separately to this document is a distributional analysis, modelling the impact of tax and social security decisions. This analysis shows that:

- The Scottish tax and social security system is progressive; and remains more progressive than the system in the rest of the UK.
- Scottish tax policy decisions taken in this Budget – including both Income Tax policy changes and the freeze in Council Tax – provide a net benefit to around 60 per cent of Scottish households, with 79 per cent of households paying no more tax as a result of these measures.
- The impact of Income Tax policy changes principally falls on the highest earning 20 per cent of households, with the top ten per cent paying an average of one per cent (£1,041) more in Income Tax each year.

What is in the Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement this year?

The Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement looks at the impact the Scottish Budget might have on people in Scotland. The Budget is complex and interconnected, and assessing the potential impacts on equality and socioeconomic characteristics (and all their intersections) is a major challenge.

- The foundation for the EFSBS document is a detailed analysis, portfolio by portfolio, looking at some of the key fairness and equality issues and the role the Budget plays in tackling those issues (see [Annex B](#)). From these detailed analyses are drawn the brief summaries in the main document (by portfolio and characteristics).
- The portfolio-by-portfolio analysis (in Annex B) outlines how equalities and fairness evidence has fed into decision making for budgets, but in order to help explain the process in more depth, for this EFSBS, we have used a case study approach. It should be noted that for policy decisions arising from the Budget, individual equality and Fairer Scotland impact assessments will be produced.
- For the case studies, we have selected a range of budget lines, from different portfolios, of different scales and different types. We have then answered the “[six key questions](#)” set out in the guidance we have previously developed in collaboration with the Equality and Human Rights Budget Advisory Group. Our case studies look at the budgets for:
 - Alcohol and Drugs Policy
 - Primary Care Dental Services
 - Early Learning and Childcare
 - Social Security
 - Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights Directorate
 - Concessionary Fares
 - Employability
 - Scottish National Investment Bank

What does the Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement tell us?

- The Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement provides a descriptive analysis. Inherently, the impacts of budget decisions on equality are varied, complex, wide ranging and interconnecting. This array of evidence is difficult to summarise, beyond the summaries already featured in the following chapters.
- The Budget itself is one link in the policy chain. Ultimately, how the money is spent will determine its impact.

- Notably, the EFSBS does show that many budget measures simultaneously tackle different types of inequality and unfairness – such as ‘Best Start Foods’, or funding for ‘Discretionary Housing Payments’.
- A range of measures particularly tackle low incomes (and their intersections with equality), including, for example, through the social security system and through funding fair pay deals.
- Examples of other measures supporting protected characteristics to varying degrees include: funding for concessionary fares, support for childcare, the reintroduction of the ‘Independent Living Fund’, and funding to organisations through the ‘Equality and Human Rights Fund’.
- The case studies look in more depth at the areas listed above. Each case study demonstrates how evidence on socioeconomic impacts and protected characteristics have been considered within the budget process.
- Finally, the budget process was strengthened this year through preliminary consideration of the impact of proposals in the ‘Programme for Government’, the use of a Ministerial workshop on the EFSBS, and also through requirements for portfolios to consider equality and fairness in the formal budget assurance process.

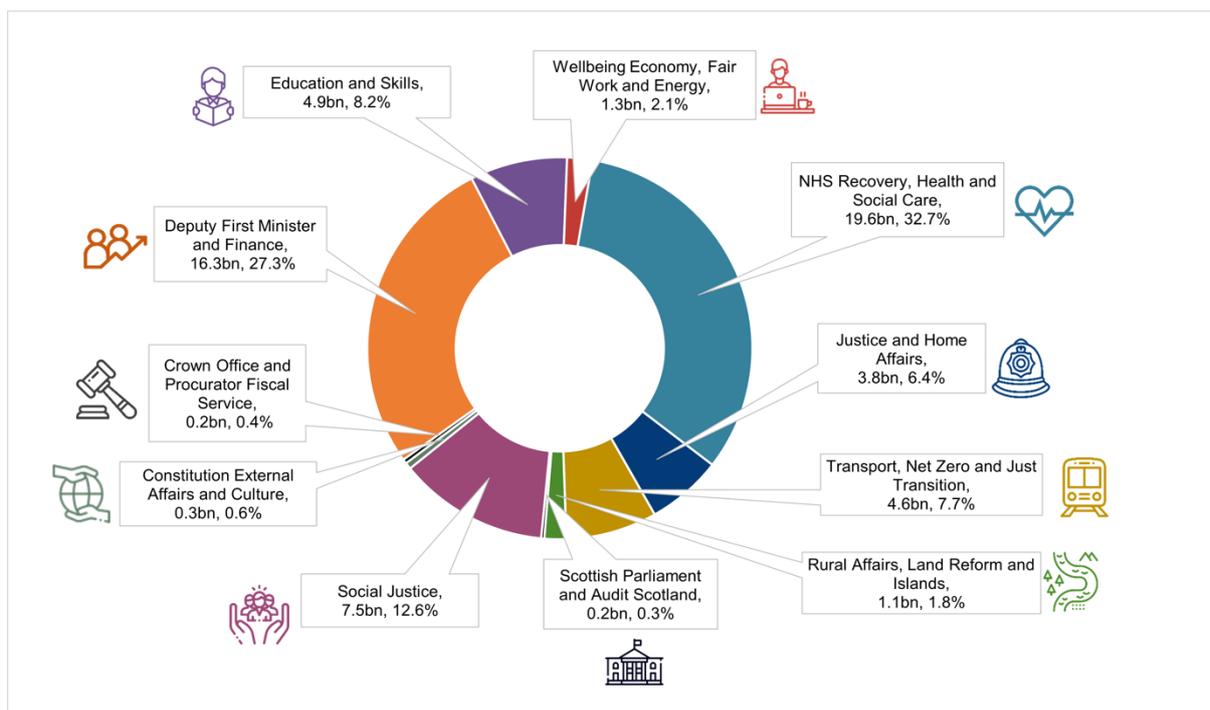
About the Scottish Budget

This Budget is for the 2024-25 financial year, which runs from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

After the Scottish Government publishes the Budget, the Scottish Parliament scrutinises it. The Scottish Parliament then votes on whether it should be changed, or created as it has been proposed.

The Scottish Budget in 2024-25 is £59.7 billion (including annually managed expenditure).

The graph below shows that the biggest areas of spend continue to be NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care; Local Government (under Deputy First Minister and Finance), and Social Justice (which includes social security payments).



Much of the Budget goes directly to a range of public bodies, who then decide how to use this funding, considering the impact on equality. The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Scottish Parliament and Audit Scotland have separate budget lines in the Scottish Budget. These are shown in the graph above.

Most public bodies are required to produce a mainstreaming report to show how they use their funding to tackle inequality. The Scottish Government

published its latest [mainstreaming report](#) in April 2023 and this includes links to the reports of other agencies.

Where does the money in the Scottish Budget come from?

The Scottish Government's funding comes from a range of sources. For public services that the Scottish Government is responsible for, it receives funding from the UK Government. The amount is calculated using a population share of related UK Government spending increases. The Scottish Budget also includes money collected from taxes that the Scottish Government controls.

Further information can be found in the Scottish Government Budget documents, in particular Annex A.

The context for this Budget

The cost of living crisis continues to present serious economic and social challenges for Scotland and the UK in 2024-25. The crisis is affecting particular households, services and sectors of the economy very differently. The effects of inflation are being felt most acutely by low income households, who are experiencing significantly higher real rates of inflation. Groups such as lone parents, ethnic minorities, women, renters, younger people, families with three or more children and disabled people are disproportionately affected by the cost of living crisis.

For example, analysis recently published by the Scottish Government, (the [equality](#) and [Fairer Scotland](#) assessments for the Scottish Government's Cash-First Plan and associated actions) has demonstrated:

- strong evidence that people who experience socioeconomic disadvantage have a higher prevalence of household food insecurity and food bank use. In the financial year 2021-22, levels of food security rose as income levels rose:
 - 17 per cent of households with gross incomes less than £200 per week were least likely to be food secure
 - 2 per cent of households with gross incomes of £1,000 or more per week were most likely to be food secure
- evidence of a higher prevalence of food insecurity and food bank use in certain household groups, (including some with protected characteristics) such as:

- younger people
- disabled people
- minority ethnic households
- single adults
- lone parents
- larger households
- low income households
- tenants in the social rented sector

Separately, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) recently published its [five year review of Scotland's equality and human rights landscape](#) assessing the state of equality and human rights looking at the nine protected characteristics safeguarded by the Equality Act 2010. The review provided an overview of the progress and challenges in areas such as: education, health, justice and work. The report details areas where progress has been made including:

- outcomes for young people
- representation and participation

However, it also highlighted areas where improvement is needed for people across the protected characteristics, such as on:

- poverty
- education
- employment
- health and access to healthcare

The 2024-25 Budget

The Budget helps deliver positive outcomes for equality and fairness in a number of areas. Despite the tough context, the Scottish Government has made choices in this Budget, and one of those is to tackle poverty, including through support for Scotland's Social Security system. We have allocated an additional £1 billion investment in Social Security in 2024-25, bringing the total we will invest to around £6.3 billion.

Some other budget choices which will tackle poverty and inequality include:

- Support for the NHS in Scotland
- Prioritised investment in health and social care
- Funding to raise pay to £12 per hour for adult social care workers in commissioned services from April 2024
- Funding to reopen the Independent Living Fund

This Budget has taken place in the face of severe financial constraints, and hard choices have been made. Particularly where budgets are constrained, it is essential that we have an approach to policy making and decision making that addresses inequality, promotes equality, advances human rights and builds a fairer Scotland. As our [response to the Government's Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group report](#) indicated, this means continuing to develop a process that is more transparent, provides more opportunities for public engagement, develops strong equality and human rights leadership and accountability, improves our impact assessments, aligns with the 'National Performance Framework', and builds and resources knowledge, capacity and skills.

Pay and Workforce

Pay and workforce is a significant driver of budget spend. There are around 600,000 people employed in the public sector in Scotland, accounting for 22.2 per cent of total employment. A recent report by Audit Scotland ([the Scottish Government's workforce challenges](#)) recommended that our financial position necessitates reforming the way in which public bodies deliver services.

We must reform the way in which public bodies deliver services to ensure they can do so more efficiently, as set out in the Public Service Reform chapter of the budget document. It also means that we will have to consider the balance of pay and workforce with some sectors needing to grow to respond to pressures and others reducing in line with reform opportunities and re-prioritisation of our work. This must be done in a way that protects public services and the Government's priority missions.

Public bodies are empowered to determine locally the target operating model for their workforce and to ensure workforce plans and projections are affordable in 2024-25 and into the medium term. Public bodies must also ensure their policies and practices and systems comply with employment, Fairer Scotland and equality requirements.

Pay Strategy Cohort

The previous '2023-24 Pay Strategy' cohort covered 55 public bodies and over 52,000 FTE (just under 10 per cent of the total devolved public sector workforce).

The 'Public Sector Pay Strategy' set the overarching framework in which public bodies can make individual choices on the impact of the strategy on their own circumstances. Public bodies have the flexibility to draw up their

own pay proposals to take into account local pay issues such as recruitment and retention, equality, and the impact of the low pay measures on other staff. The pay negotiation principles within the strategy actively encourage employers to take into account their own staffing profile, local evidence, views of staff and unions and equality issues in framing their pay proposals.

The 'Pay Strategy' expects employers to take a progressive approach to their pay awards and requires employers to pay at least the 'Real Living Wage'. This could provide a positive benefit for lower income households and help work towards reducing the inequalities of outcome for those households. It is also noted there is a higher likelihood of employees with a protected characteristic living within a lower income household. Poverty rates tend to be higher among the following groups: youngest adults; households where someone is disabled; single mothers; LGB+; ethnic minorities and particularly Pakistani and Chinese ethnic groups; and/or Muslim adults.

This may also help in working towards reducing the gender pay gap within the public sector as it should increase the overall base levels of pay for lower earners where traditionally women are overly concentrated, particularly if this is further supported by the continued restraint applied to higher earners including senior appointments, where there are higher proportions of men.

The objectives of the 'Pay Strategy' are designed to support the Scottish Government's Purpose on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth and reducing inequalities and giving equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress. The 'Pay Strategy' provides the framework for individual employers to set pay increases in a way that are fiscally sustainable and fair while helping to sustain public sector jobs and protect public services within the tight financial position resulting from the continued real terms reduction in the Scottish Government's resource budget.

What is the distributional impact of the tax and social security measures?

Alongside the budget the Scottish Government has published an [analysis](#) of the impact of tax and social security measures included in the 2024-25 Scottish Budget on households of different income levels and characteristics.

Distributional analysis is critical to understanding how Scottish Government policies are reducing inequality and targeting support at those who need it most. The analysis is based on modelling, and only includes policies that

directly affect the financial resources available to households – i.e. personal taxes and cash benefits. At this point it does not incorporate in-kind benefits (such as free school meals or free childcare), or the benefits of public services received by households, such as transport, education or healthcare.

The analysis shows:

Comparing Scotland to rest of the UK

- The Scottish tax and social security system is progressive; and remains more progressive than the system in the rest of the UK.
- Around 58 per cent of households – mostly those on lower incomes – are better off under the Scottish tax and social security system than they would be in the rest of the UK.
- The analysis also breaks down the impact of the Scottish tax and benefit system versus the rest of the UK, by household type. Driven by the impact of the Scottish Child Payment, in general, families with children are better off in Scotland, and lone parents ([92 per cent of whom are female](#)) gain most. The impact on households with disabled members is smaller (a net positive position compared to all households)
- The impact of differences between Scotland and the UK in income tax policy is greatest in the middle age cohorts (those aged 35 to 54), where lifetime earnings typically peak. The impact of differences in social security payments is greatest in younger age cohorts, due to the effect of the Scottish Child Payment.

Looking at the impact of tax and social security decisions taken in this Budget

- Scottish tax policy decisions taken in this Budget – including both Income Tax policy changes and the freeze in Council Tax – provides a net benefit to around 60 per cent of Scottish households, with 79 per cent of households paying no more tax as a result of these measures.
- The impact of Income Tax policy changes principally falls on the highest earning 20 per cent of households, with the top 10 per cent paying an average of one per cent of their income (£1,041) more in tax a year in Income Tax.

- The greatest negative impacts of the tax policy changes are for those in the middle age cohorts, where earnings typically peak.

What is the Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement?

The 'Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement' looks at the impact that the Scottish Budget might have on people in Scotland.

It assesses what the Scottish Government is proposing to spend public money on and how this is changing. It considers if these decisions are likely to benefit some types of people more than others, and how it might help reduce inequality between different groups of people.

The 'Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement' is published alongside the Scottish Budget every year.

What is inequality?

Equality is about ensuring everyone has equal status, rights and opportunity. It is also the belief that no one should have fewer or poorer chances in life due to:

- protected characteristics
- the resources they or their family have

We know in Scotland this is not always the case and we want to use the money allocated by the budget to address inequality. Inequality means that for some groups of people parts of their lives are harder or worse than for other groups of people due to the barriers they face in trying to improve their circumstances. This could involve their access to things like health, education or income. For example, certain groups of people may find it harder to gain employment, be more likely to attain lower exam scores in school or be more likely to be victims of crime compared to other groups. They also may not see themselves represented in positions of power or may be discriminated against.

What groups of people are we talking about?

We have laws that say we must consider the differences between people according to certain characteristics. These are:

- Age (e.g. children, older people)
- Disability (disabled people)
- Gender reassignment (trans people)
- Pregnancy and maternity (mothers)
- Race (e.g. Black Scottish, White Gypsy/Traveller)
- Religion or belief (e.g. Christians, Muslims, Sikhs)
- Sex (men, women)
- Sexual orientation (e.g. lesbian, gay and bisexual people)

We have a duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. We also have a legal duty to reduce inequality for adults and children who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, in that they:

- experience low income or wealth
- experience deprivation, or
- come from a disadvantaged background

These duties also mean we must consider how inequalities are compounded for people with more than one of these characteristics. For example, a minority ethnic disabled renter on income-related benefits, an asylum-seeking woman, or a low income, lone parent household headed by a mother with caring responsibilities.

We recognise for these groups of individuals that the [intersection of disadvantage compounds structural inequality](#) and this is especially evident in this cost of living crisis.

What is in this year's Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement?

The Budget is a complex and interconnected document, so assessing all potential impacts on equality and socioeconomic characteristics, and their intersections, represents a huge challenge. This document attempts to shine a light on some of the analysis and thinking within the government as difficult budget choices have been made.

[Annex A](#) provides some more detail on the overall process followed to develop this statement and provides further updates on our progress on equality, fairer Scotland and Human Rights budgeting.

The most detailed analysis is that found in [Annex B](#). These are the returns provided by each portfolio, setting out their assessment of some of the issues, and how the Budget tackles them. There is clearly a huge amount of material in Annex B, and so the next two sections in the main document aim to draw out a selection of the key points from Annex B in summary form – firstly by portfolio, and then looking across the whole of government by different equality and socioeconomic characteristics.

A key aim of the EFSBS is to set out clearly how equality and Fairer Scotland issues have been taken into account as decisions have been made. There are over 200 'Level 3' budget lines (the most detailed breakdown in the budget document itself). We have used a sample of eight Level 3 / Level 4 budget lines as case studies in [Annex C](#). They come from different parts of government, and include different types of budget.

For each of the eight case studies, we have answered six key questions. These [six questions](#) were developed in collaboration with the Equality and Human Rights Advisory Group:

1. What outcome is the policy and associated budget decision aiming to achieve?
2. What do you know about existing inequalities of outcome in relation to the budget area?
3. How will your budget decisions impact upon different people and places?
4. How will your budget decisions contribute to the realisation of human rights?
5. Could the budget be used differently to better address existing inequalities of outcome and advance human rights?
6. How will the impact of the budget decisions be evaluated?

This 'Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement' document is one of a number of budget publications. Further details are available at gov.scot/budget.

As in previous years, an easy read version of the Budget will be published. This year, an easy read version of the Equality and Fairer Scotland Budget Statement is also planned.

National Priorities

Policy Prospectus: Equality, opportunity, community: New leadership - A fresh start

In April 2023 the new First Minister set out a [vision for Scotland](#) and the outcomes he and his government aim to achieve by 2026. This set out three critical, and inter dependent missions for the government:

- Equality: Tackling poverty and protecting people from harm.
- Opportunity: Building a fair, green and growing economy.
- Community: Delivering efficient and effective public services.

Programme for Government (PFG)

Every year, the 'Programme for Government' sets out the Scottish Government's aims for the coming year. The budget then allocates money to support these goals. The [2023-24 Programme for Government](#) focused on delivering the three missions. The PFG set out actions to be taken by each government portfolio.

As part of the process of developing this year's 'Programme for Government' we introduced a revised and more comprehensive process to review the Equality and Fairer Scotland implications of decisions. While all individual policies are subject to the full range of impact assessments, this considered a summary of cumulative impacts at portfolio level.

National Performance Framework

[Scotland's National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) is our wellbeing framework. The eleven 'National Outcomes' set out a vision of what wellbeing means for the people of Scotland and enable everyone to work towards these shared goals. Our commitment to the three missions of equality, opportunity and community, as laid out in the recent 'Policy Prospectus', will contribute towards all the National Outcomes, taking us towards a country that prioritises wellbeing for all.

A [review of the National Outcomes](#) is underway and is due to complete in 2024.

Human Rights

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to everyone. There are many rights and freedoms that come under this umbrella including civil and political, as well as economic and social rights. For example, these rights include the right to adequate living standards and the best standard of health care. In the portfolio sections below we have set out which human rights are most applicable to the portfolio. This illustrates how the budget content aligns to key human rights.

Human rights should influence the process of setting the Budget, alongside the content of the Budget. In our response to the recommendations to the Equality and Human Rights Budget Advisory Group, mentioned above, we have shown how embedding the Human Rights principles of Transparency, Participation and Accountability has, and will increasingly continue to, inform the Budget.

Summary by Characteristic

What this analysis aims to do

This section provides a summary of some of the equality and Fairer Scotland issues identified by portfolios and some of the ways that the budget tackles those issues.

Further details, and evidence/sources are available in Annex B.

Annex C supplements this analysis through the use of case studies, looking at how equality and Fairer Scotland evidence was used in the development and delivery of the budget.

Background

Each of the nine Scottish Government budget portfolio areas was asked to draw out two key issues, risks or inequalities for nine characteristics, and to identify the budget lines, particularly those that were part of the 'Programme for Government', which tackled these inequalities. There is a potentially huge range of budget activity – the actions selected are considered by portfolios to be of substance and importance, and are set out in Annex B. Clearly, however, these are not the only aspects of the budget that play a role.

Annex B therefore sets out many risks / inequalities, supported by separate pieces of analysis, describing how existing budgets and PfG commitments contribute to tackling those risks.

Based on the information in Annex B, this summary identifies a brief selection of specific budget lines, and highlighted activities.

These one page summaries should be taken as providing a “flavour” of the issues and budget impacts.

Cross-cutting measures

<p>These measures were identified as addressing a broad range of inequalities. They are collected here to avoid repetition in individual tables.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Best Start Foods’ - removing income thresholds, including continued eligibility for young parents and some young people. By removing income thresholds, an additional 20,000 people will be eligible for support including pregnant women and parents with children under three. £18 million is available in 2024-25 to help support around 51,000 people. (socioeconomic, age, pregnancy and maternity, sex). • Funding available to local authorities to spend on ‘Discretionary Housing Payments’ (2024-25 - £90 million). Those most likely to be affected by the benefit cap are larger families and lone parents. £7.8 million is available in 2024-25 to mitigate the benefit cap (socioeconomic, age, pregnancy and maternity, sex). • Funding for employability to support delivery of a labour market that is inclusive and offers equality of opportunity for all to access and to progress in work, including through ‘No One Left Behind’ and ‘Fair Start Scotland’ (socioeconomic, age, disability, race, sex). • Our ‘Fair Work’ commitments will support delivery of cross-government and economy-wide interventions to promote fair work, including through our ‘Fair Work First’ approach; supporting capacity in trade unions to promote and enhance leadership on fair work and equalities in workplaces, and continuing support for ‘real Living Wage’ accreditation (age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, sex). • Our funding for justice partners, including Police Scotland and the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, has an important role in protecting vulnerable people, addressing discrimination and hate crime and bringing those responsible for it to justice. (gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, disability).
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Socioeconomic inequality

<p>Socioeconomic inequality means ...</p>	<p>Over a million people live in relative poverty after housing costs (one in five in the population and nearly one in four children), and affordability of food and other essentials is a key issue. Children living in poverty are more likely to experience care, and have poorer health, development and educational attainment.</p> <p>Socioeconomic inequality means some people engage less with culture, are less likely to participate in education, employment or training, are under-represented at universities, and are more likely to experience barriers to labour market participation, particularly in higher earning roles. They are at higher risk of poorer mental wellbeing outcomes such as depression, anxiety, suicide, and self-harm and live shorter lives on average. Other health outcomes such as alcohol-related deaths, problematic drug use, or risk of child obesity are all patterned by socioeconomic disadvantage.</p> <p>Socioeconomically disadvantaged groups experience inequalities in justice, for instance being overrepresented among prison arrivals or victims of crime, including violent crime. The rate of dwelling fires and fire related casualties are higher in the most deprived areas. People living in these areas are more likely to perceive problems such as vandalism, nuisance animals and rowdy behaviours as common in their neighbourhoods. They have less access to private modes of transport and are more reliant on public transport, especially buses. They have been most affected by the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, have less access to savings and affordable borrowing, and can less afford options such as low emission travel.</p>
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A wide range of budget measures tackle either poverty or associated inequalities, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1 billion to tackling the poverty-related attainment gap and support educational recovery, including up to £200 million in 2024-25 to support tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘Scottish Child Payment’: improving the lives of over 300,000 children in low-income families across Scotland, and lifting an estimated 50,000 children out of relative poverty this year.• Continue work to build a system of school age childcare.• ‘Education Maintenance Allowance’, providing a £30 per week payment to 16-to-19 year olds from low income households to overcome financial barriers to stay in school or college.• Public health measures such as ‘Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund’ for Adults to prevent social isolation, and suicide prevention budget.• ‘CashBack for Communities’ programme.• Funding to grassroots and community-based projects supporting people affected by problem substance use.• ‘Heat in Buildings’ Programme.• Social security investment: We will invest over £6 billion in Scottish Government benefits and payments in 2024-25, supporting over 1.2 million people.• Through our ‘Fair Work First’ policy we are leveraging employers’ commitment to fair work by applying Fair Work principles to public sector grants, other funding and contracts where it is relevant and proportionate to do so. Employers are being asked to commit to, among other things, payment of at least the ‘real Living Wage’ and appropriate channels for effective workers’ voice.
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Age

<p>Age inequality means ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher rates of child poverty in racialised minority households, in lone parent households, and in families with a mother under 25. • Higher homelessness rates for young people. • Young people are more likely to be unemployed, vulnerable to long term employment ‘scarring’, to earn less than the Real Living Wage and be financially vulnerable and in unmanageable debt. • Worry about experiencing sexual assault is highest amongst 16-to-24 year olds. • Older people and families with young children are consistently identified as groups with higher energy needs, and vulnerable to the cold. • Different transport patterns with people aged under 21 relying more on buses for transport. • Different patterns in cultural attendance - a higher proportion of younger age groups attended cultural events or visited places of culture than in older age groups. • Digital participation is generally lower among the older population. • Rural areas tend to have an older population. • The pandemic has had negative impacts on young people, for example on self-reported mental wellbeing and labour market experiences, whilst the employment rate for older people (aged 50-64) in July 2022-June 2023 was lower than the estimated employment rate for 25-34 and 35-49 year olds.
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A wide range of budget measures tackle age inequality, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 22s concessionary travel scheme. • 1140 hours of high quality funded early learning and childcare. • Financial support for care-experienced and disabled students, and childcare support for student parents. • ‘Job Start Payment’ - to help young people with the costs of starting a new job. • The ‘Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan and Fund’.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 300 community-based supports and services offering an alternative to CAMHS plus counselling services in all secondary schools (£16 million a year).• 'Heat in Buildings' Programme.
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Disability

<p>Disability inequality means ...</p>	<p>Increased overlap between households in deepest poverty and households containing a disabled person. There is lower cultural attendance and participation among those reporting that they are disabled. Disabled young people have lower school attendance and attainment. They are less likely to be participating in education, employment or training (aged 16-19) and have lower completion rates on college courses. Disabled people are less likely to be in employment, earn less on average, less likely to have access to fair work, and more likely to work in lower paid occupations. The proportion of disabled sole traders is relatively low in Scotland. Disabled people have a higher incidence of civil legal problems and are more likely to be victims of crime, and to experience discrimination and harassment.</p> <p>Many long term disabled people have higher than average needs for health and social care services. People with learning disabilities have some of the poorest health of any group. Young people with additional support needs and young disabled people were among those most negatively affected by the pandemic. Disabled people or people with a chronic health condition are more likely to be in fuel poverty. Disabled people are more likely to have been affected by the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>Employment barriers for disabled people include health needs, caring responsibilities, unaffordable childcare, transport, inaccessible job adverts and application processes, workplace discrimination, lack of flexible working and adequate support, and effects of employment on benefits. Disabled people may face barriers in accessing services particularly in rural areas and through digital exclusion. Disabled people are more likely to rely on using the bus to travel and are less likely to drive.</p>
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A wide range of budget measures tackle disability inequality, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Child Disability Payment’ and ‘Adult Disability Payment’ replacing ‘Disability Living Allowance’ for children and ‘Personal Independence Payment’. ‘Pension Age Disability Payment’ will replace ‘Attendance Allowance’.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support to local authorities for individual needs of children and young people with additional support needs.• Support for care-experienced and disabled students, and childcare support for student parents.• Funding National Collections and National Performing Companies, who provide tailored events/tours.• Bursary and grants budget to support disabled students.• SDS enhanced contribution rates for disabled people up to the age of 29 who are undertaking a Modern Apprenticeship (MA).• Employability and Fair Work commitments, including the 'No One Left Behind Approach' and implementing the 'Fair Work Action Plan'.• £600,000 'Digital Pioneers' initiative.
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Gender Reassignment

<p>Gender reassignment inequality means ...</p>	<p>There is some evidence of a link between gender reassignment and socioeconomic disadvantage. Transgender people suffer poorer outcomes on homelessness, health and employment measures.</p> <p>Transphobic bullying remains a problem in schools, although there is limited available evidence in relation to discrimination against trans individuals in education.</p> <p>Many trans people face discrimination, bullying and harassment in employment, including during recruitment processes.</p> <p>High proportions of transgender young people had deliberately harmed themselves or attempted to take their own life.</p> <p>Waiting times to access gender identity healthcare are long.</p> <p>High proportions of transgender people avoid being open about gender identity on public transport for fear of negative reaction. In 2022-23 55 charges were reported with an aggravation of prejudice relating to transgender identity.</p>
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A range of budget measures tackle gender reassignment inequality, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding of ‘respectme’, Scotland’s anti-bullying service. • ‘Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for Adults’ has a particular focus on supporting a range of at risk groups including LGBTQI+ communities. • Funding will continue in 2024-25 for the hate crime charter which offers training for public transport operators and raises awareness of issues that affect vulnerable groups. • Funding for children and young people’s community mental health and wellbeing supports and services.

Pregnancy and Maternity

<p>Pregnancy and maternity inequality means ...</p>	<p>There are high levels of money worries for those who are pregnant or on maternity leave and high levels of poverty for new families in first year of a new child’s life. Motherhood has a significant impact on the number of hours that some mothers can work, which affects their pay and income, and mothers can face discrimination at work. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the unequal responsibility for housework and childcare. Pregnancy and maternity could be factors that discourage women from seeking a career.</p> <p>11.8 per cent of pregnant women reported they were current smokers at their first antenatal appointment in 2021/22. Mental health issues affect 10-20 per cent of women during pregnancy and the first year after having a baby. Women from socioeconomically deprived backgrounds, and immigrant, asylum seeking and refugee women are at increased risk of perinatal mental ill health. Single mothers have a higher fuel poverty rate than single working age adults without children.</p> <p>Single parents are mostly women and are more likely to be in rented, social housing. Social renters tend to be less satisfied with their housing.</p>
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A range of budget measures tackle pregnancy and maternity inequality, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Parental Employability Support’. • Perinatal and infant mental health programmes. • Linked to ‘Cash-First Plan’, improved emergency pathways to cash, infant formula or breastfeeding support, and wider holistic support in a crisis.

Race

<p>Racial inequality means ...</p>	<p>Racialised minority households are more likely to have deeper levels of poverty and a greater proportion of their income is spent on essentials that are subject to inflation. The employment rate for people from racialised minorities is consistently lower than for white people, they are more likely to earn low incomes and be in relative poverty. In 2021, the ethnicity employment rate gap was estimated at 11.7 percentage points, and in 2019 Scotland’s ethnicity pay gap was 10.3 per cent. People with multiple protected characteristics can face heightened barriers to employment.</p> <p>Adults from racialised minorities are more likely to have experienced discrimination and harassment. Race aggravated crime is the most commonly reported hate crime. Public transport can provide a space in which perpetrators can target violence or threat of violence at certain groups of society. Seasonal Agricultural Workers in Scotland have experienced low wages, challenging housing, and some experiences of racism and xenophobia. White people report higher attendance of some art forms such as art and theatre.</p> <p>Racialised minority groups in general have similar or lower mortality than the general population, but may have specific health problems, such as heart disease and diabetes among those of South Asian descent. Overall, the White ethnicity group has proportionately higher uptake of vaccines than racialised minority groups.</p> <p>People from racialised minorities are more likely to be in households assessed as homeless/threatened with homelessness. Migrant workers in rural Scotland experience isolation and face barriers in accessing affordable accommodation and English language provision.</p>
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A range of budget measures tackle racial inequality, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for the Scottish Attainment Challenge. • Alongside Higher Education Student Support free tuition support, the bursary and grants budget helps to support specific groups.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employability and Fair Work commitments, including the 'Fair Work Action Plan' and 'Anti Racist Employment Strategy'.• 'Ending Homelessness Together'.• 'CashBack for Communities' scheme has supported people across 19 specific ethnic groups.• Funding the Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland in recognition of the need for a strategic and coherent anti-racism approach to data, strategy and policy in Scotland.
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Religion and Belief

<p>Religion and Belief inequality means ...</p>	<p>Muslim adults are more likely to be in relative poverty. There is variation in employment rates by religion. Since 2004, the employment rate of Muslims in Scotland has been consistently lower than the employment rate for the population at large (46.5 per cent versus 73.2 per cent in 2021).</p> <p>Some attitudes and practices among religious groups may results in unequal access to healthcare. People experiencing stigma as a result of religious belief or practice may experience worse health outcomes.</p> <p>Over the last five years, the number of religiously aggravated hate crimes reported has fluctuated between around 530 and 670 per year. There were 576 religiously aggravated charges reported in 2022-23, 8 per cent more than in 2021-22. Analysis of religion aggravated hate crimes in 2020-21, showed that in just under half of charges the perpetrator showed prejudice towards the Catholic community. There is some evidence of increased Islamophobic abuse on public transport.</p>
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A range of budget measures tackle religion and belief inequality, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Funeral Support Payment’ (2024-25 - £12 million supporting around 6,000 people meet the costs of a funeral, alleviating burden of debt). Those applying for ‘Funeral Support Payment’ are more likely to identify as having a religion. • Funding will continue in 2024-25 for the ‘hate crime charter’ which offers training for public transport operators and raises awareness of issues that affect vulnerable groups.

Sex

<p>Sex inequality means ...</p>	<p>Women’s income has been hit harder by UK social security cuts since 2010. Women are disproportionately impacted by cost of living crisis, are more likely to be in poverty, have lower savings / wealth, and be less able to increase paid work than men, due to caring responsibilities. Women claim 89 per cent of ‘Scottish Child Payments’, and 69 per cent of ‘Carers Allowance’.</p> <p>Women experience a range of barriers in the labour market, and this drives aspects of the gender pay gap. There are intersectional barriers in the labour market e.g. disabled women, racially minoritised women and women over 50. Women (and particularly racially minoritised women) are more likely to be in insecure work and are overrepresented in sectors that have historically low pay, low progression and low status but can provide more flexibility to allow women to undertake caring responsibilities. Women are less likely to be self-employed than men, and female-led companies are less likely to receive investment than male-led businesses. There is a significant gender pay gap for women in remote rural areas. For example, women are underrepresented in offshore, and senior leadership positions in fisheries. Approximately 77 per cent of the health and social care workforce is female, with significant segregation by gender, and there is a gender pay gap in the NHS.</p> <p>Women are likely to experience indirect effects of cost pressures that are not always apparent in routine data, for example due to formal or informal caring responsibilities and resulting loss of income or delayed career progression.</p> <p>There are differences in levels of developmental concerns recorded and in high school level attainment between boys and girls. Girls also continue to be more likely to enter positive destinations than boys. Gender differences in subject choice are evident throughout school, in apprenticeships, and in further and higher education.</p> <p>Data shows worse health outcomes for men, particularly young men. Young to middle-aged men are at particular risk of poorer health, and have declining engagement with health services. 70 per cent of all people dying from suicide have been male. There are higher smoking rates for men. Women are more</p>
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	<p>likely to experience mental health concerns than men, with higher risk of eating disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). While women are more likely to have ever attempted suicide than men, men are at much higher risk of dying by suicide. Women who have heart attacks receive poorer care than men.</p> <p>The impact of violence against women and girls is significant, and is both a cause and a consequence of their inequality, with most victims of sexual crime and domestic abuse being women.</p> <p>Men are more likely to be the victim of serious non-sexual violence.</p> <p>More men aged 16 and over were employed in the Arts, culture and creative industries sector than women in 2022 and women occupy a larger proportion of part-time positions.</p> <p>There is a suggestion that public transport is predominantly designed to serve commuters and these services benefit men more than women. Women and girls are forced to alter travel habits in order to feel safe on public transport, including younger women, those from racialised minorities and disabled women. Female transport workers also reported feeling unsafe.</p>
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A wide range of budget measures tackle sex inequality, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,140 hours of high quality funded early learning and childcare for all eligible children. • ‘Five Family Payments’ (FFPs): the majority of people who claim FFP are women. Women make up the majority of lone parents, and lone parents are at greater risk of poverty. • ‘Scottish Child Payment’: the vast majority of SCP recipients (85 per cent) are women. • ‘Best Start Grant’, ‘Early Learning Payment’ and ‘School Age Payment’. • ‘Carer Support Payment’ will replace ‘Carer’s Allowance’ in Scotland from the end of 2023 – range of enhancements to process, eligibility and level of support. • Through our Fair Work commitments in the ‘Fair Work Action Plan’ we are supporting workplace equality and

	<p>promoting flexible working. Funding for the Techscaler network, which works in partnership with organisations that support those who face greater systemic barriers to start-up participation, including women.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘CashBack for Communities’ have focused on developing positive interactions between the sexes, for example to reduce violence against women and developing positive relationships. Some justice related project strands will relate more to young men.• ‘Delivering Equally Safe’ strategy, to address the violence and abuse that women and girls face, which is a cause and a consequence of inequality. ‘Equally Safe’, Scotland’s world leading Strategy to end Violence Against Women and Girls, focuses on preventing violence from occurring in the first place, and strengthening the justice response to victims and perpetrators.
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Sexual Orientation

<p>Sexual orientation inequality means ...</p>	<p>LGBQ+ pupils may be particularly likely to experience bullying at school. LGBQ young people experienced higher levels of online bullying and lower levels of mental wellbeing during the pandemic compared with heterosexual young people.</p> <p>Despite studies showing equal or better pay for LGB people, they continue to experience discrimination, harassment and abuse in work and education. Hate crimes with an aggravation of prejudice relating to sexual orientation are the second most commonly reported hate crime. The number of charges reported has increased each year since 2014-15 with 1,884 reported in 2022-23.</p> <p>Other sexual orientations which are not heterosexual were more likely to report poor mental health, and to experience discrimination in their access and interactions with health care services.</p> <p>Sexual orientation was viewed by some as a barrier to career progression in the Scottish arts sector in 2016.</p>
<p>The role of Scottish Government budget (selected examples)</p>	<p>A range of budget measures tackle sexual orientation inequality, including some of the cross-cutting measures listed previously. Other major areas of spend cited in returns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding provided to organisations through the ‘Equality and Human Rights Fund’ who are working to promote LGBTQI+ equality in Scotland to continue into 2025. • Funding for ‘respectme’, Scotland’s anti-bullying service. • There are a range of social security benefits available to people who meet the eligibility criteria including those who share protected characteristics. • Funding will continue in 2024-25 for the ‘hate crime charter’ which offers training for operators and raises awareness of issues that affect vulnerable groups.

Introduction

This section summarises some of the key impacts of the budget by portfolio. It draws on information from [Annex B](#), which provides further detail, and sets out two key risks or issues identified by each portfolio in relation to each characteristic, and how the budget tackles those issues.

Further detail is also in [Annex C](#), through the use of case studies, on how the government has considered equality and fairness evidence as part of the budget process.

Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

Budget Purpose

Enhance Scotland's international relationships and reputation to support delivery of the Government's domestic priorities, including to increase prosperity and wellbeing. Promote and support our ambition for Scotland to be a good global citizen. Protect Scotland's place and interests in Europe. Implement a strategy to address Scotland's population challenges. Promote Scotland as a great place to live, visit, work, study, and do business. Ensure everyone can realise their own creativity and have access to and enjoy culture.

Primary national outcomes:

-  Communities
-  Culture
-  International

Key human rights:

- Article 10: Freedom of expression
- Right to take part in cultural life
- Right to an adequate standard of living

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

Ensuring all groups are able to more equally participate in, enjoy and access careers in our diverse culture, heritage and events sectors is at the heart of the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture portfolio. The budget enables funded organisations to deliver an active programme of cultural activity, outreach and events that take into account the preferences and circumstances of groups who experience structural disadvantage and those from lower income groups.

The Scottish Government is committed to a dual approach to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: to tackle poverty and inequality at home in Scotland and to help developing countries to grow in a fair and sustainable manner. International development is a crucial element of Scotland's global contribution and a demonstration of our commitment to being a good global citizen. At the forefront of our efforts is our 'International Development

Fund' to support and empower our partner countries, and a 'Humanitarian Emergency Fund' to respond to international humanitarian crises.

Deputy First Minister and Finance

Budget Purpose

Deliver the Scottish Budget, manage public finances, fiscal policy and taxation, including income tax, coordinate public service reform. Also responsible for local government finance and the Verity House Agreement, and sponsorship of several public inquiries.

Primary national outcomes:

-  Communities
-  Economy
-  Poverty
-  Environment
-  Fair work and business

Key human rights:

- Article 4: Freedom from slavery and forced labour
- Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Article 10: Freedom of expression
- Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms
- Protocol 1, Article 3: Right to participate in free elections
- Fair and just conditions of work
- An adequate standard of living
- Equality and non-discrimination

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

This portfolio provides strategic oversight, coordination and leadership for cross-government activity. This portfolio supports effective and efficient delivery of activity in other portfolios which directly and indirectly tackle inequalities.

The portfolio is responsible for ensuring sound and sustainable public finances. This includes delivering a balanced budget, and setting and monitoring tax policy and portfolio spending plans.

In setting the overall Scottish Government Budget, this portfolio is responsible for ensuring that tax and spending decisions deliver the best possible outcomes, and are taken in line with our equality and Fairer Budgeting requirements. This year, we are improving the analysis that supports these requirements by publishing a detailed analysis of the distributional and equalities impacts of tax and social security policy decisions. Setting multi-year spending plans in this Budget also allows individual portfolios and Scottish Government overall to consider the equalities impacts of our spending choices over a longer time horizon.

The portfolio is also responsible for funding Local Government, and developing a stronger partnership through the Verity House Agreement. Funding for Local Government takes account of demographics, disadvantage and various other considerations and allocates resources based on relative need, including age, disability, and levels of deprivation.

The portfolio is also responsible for a ten-year programme of public service reform, leading work across government to deliver the 'Whole Family Wellbeing investment', and supporting 'Community Wealth Building', all of which will support activity across government to reduce inequality.

Education and Skills

Budget Purpose

Change children and young people's lives for the better in and beyond educational settings, and ensure that people are able to engage in learning and skills development throughout their lives to reach their full potential.

Primary national outcomes:



Education



Children and Young People



Economy



Poverty

Key human rights:

- Right to education
- Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Right to an adequate standard of living
- Right to take part in cultural life

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

Delivering equity and reducing inequality is at the heart of investment in Education and Skills. Spend within the portfolio is targeted to reduce the differences in development and attainment levels for children and young people with protected characteristics or experiencing socio economic disadvantage.

We will build on the success of our 1140 programme of funded early learning and childcare by continuing work to build a system of school age childcare and to develop an expansion of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) for more families with a 2 year old. We will also pay staff delivering funded ELC in the private, voluntary and independent sector at least £12 per hour and recruit more childminders.

While continuing to support children from deprived backgrounds through our 'Scottish Attainment Challenge' programme, we will work with Local Authorities to prepare for the expansion of free school meal provision to pupils in receipt of the 'Scottish Child Payment'. The actions taken through

our joint 'Additional Support for Learning Action Plan' with Local Authorities will help support improvements in the implementation of additional support for learning and the children, young people and their families supported by it.

The 'Higher Education Student Support budget' will provide bursaries, student loans and free tuition: supporting young people and adult learners to access educational opportunities and entry to future employment. Investment in our tertiary education and skills system will provide lifelong learning opportunities linked to the future needs of the economy.

Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy

Budget Purpose

To deliver support to industry and businesses, as well as to entrepreneurs, workers and those seeking work; to extend and enhance Scotland's digital infrastructure and innovation in emerging sectors; and to promote industrial decarbonisation and diversification - driving our transition to a fair, green, growing economy that provides opportunities for all.

Primary national outcomes:

-  Economy
-  Environment
-  Fair Work and Business
-  International
-  Poverty
-  Communities
-  Health

Key human rights:

- Right to freedom from forced and compulsory labour
- Right to respect for private and family life
- Right to work, and to fair and just conditions of work
- Right to an adequate standard of living
- Equality and non-discrimination
- Rights for women (CEDAW), ethnic minority groups (CERD), disabled people (CRPD), children (CRC)

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

Our vision is for a Wellbeing Economy which meets the needs and aspirations of people and provides opportunities for all. We will use the powers available to us to build a fair, green and growing economy which benefits all of Scotland's communities and people, and where businesses thrive.

The National Strategy for Economic Transformation has an ambition to tackle structural economic inequalities. We have published equality impact

assessments and a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment summary for the strategy, and established a Centre of Expertise to embed equality and human rights in economic policy-making. We are taking forward recommendations from the 'Pathways' report on Women in Entrepreneurship to encourage women and other under-represented groups to become entrepreneurs. We are addressing barriers to start-up participation for under-represented groups through the Techscaler network. We are building an inclusive labour market through delivering person-centred employability support and implementing the 'Fair Work Action Plan'. We are also developing Just Transition Plans that will consider how the changes required as part of the transition to net zero will tackle entrenched inequalities.

NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care

Budget Purpose

To deliver efficient and effective public services and tackle health, poverty and inequalities.

Primary national outcomes:



Health



Children and Young People



Communities



Human Rights

Key human rights:

- Article 2: Right to life
- Article 8: Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
- Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12: Right to marry and start a family
- Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

We are committed to providing equitable access to health and social care services and treatment. Prioritising NHS Recovery and addressing long delays in medical treatment or assessment will produce benefits for all population groups. Local impact assessments will identify and mitigate any aspects that are relevant for patients with protected characteristics. That will include taking action to eliminate discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity. As an example of this, we are taking specific action on long waiting times to assess gender identity healthcare and to improve delivery of services. This work will support the reduction of health inequalities experienced by trans (including non-binary) people.

We are committed to reducing inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage. Last year's Parliamentary inquiry on health inequalities

highlighted key issues that need to be addressed if we are to narrow gaps in health outcomes for people in Scotland, including those widened by COVID-19. These priorities underpin the decision, informed by stakeholder evidence, to identify 'poverty and deprivation' as a key cause of mental health inequality to be tackled through actions in the 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Delivery Plan'. We are working across Primary Care to improve services and support for all, including people who have unmet needs and are at higher risk of health inequalities.

This includes our work to enhance the role of multidisciplinary teams, working alongside GPs and in community settings to support patient care, and to maximise preventative and proactive approaches which are offered in the community.

We are investing more in practices servicing disadvantaged areas, including new Inclusion Health Action in GP funding for general practices in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde with the highest levels of poverty and disadvantage. Across our portfolio commitments, work is either complete or underway that supports the aims of Fairer Scotland Duty, including Investment to increase pay for social care workers on low incomes and supporting NHS Boards to open up new, accessible routes into Health and Social Care careers and progression, including through earn-as-you-learn models.

Justice and Home Affairs

Budget Purpose

Keep our communities safe and secure, and administer justice in its various forms: civil, criminal and administrative.

Primary national outcomes:



Communities



Human Rights

Key human rights:

- Right to liberty and security of person
- Right to a fair trial
- Right to freedom from punishment without law

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

The portfolio is committed to advancing equality and addressing the causes of inequality, including tackling all forms of gender inequality and tackling and preventing violence against women and girls. It helps to create an inclusive and respectful society in which all people and communities live in safety and security.

Through our funding of justice partners, we are investing in a range of system-wide measures to prevent and reduce crime and re-offending and ensure an effective system of civil law, as well as supporting victims and witnesses of crime. Over 80 per cent of the portfolio's budget is allocated to justice partners, who are required under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, and under both the PSED and the Fairer Scotland Duty to advance equality of opportunity when taking strategic decisions.

Evidence suggests that women are less likely to feel safe and are disproportionately affected by both sexual crimes and domestic abuse. We are tackling and preventing violence against women and girls by specifically targeting domestic abuse and sexual violence handling in the justice system.

In addition, disabled people are more likely to be a victim of crime and experience discrimination and harassment. Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender adults and minority ethnic people are also more likely to experience discrimination. Our funding for justice partners will help protect vulnerable people, addressing discrimination and hate crime and bringing those responsible for it to justice.

There is a strong relationship between deprivation and crime. People living in the most deprived areas are more likely to experience crime and are also over-represented in prison arrivals. Young offenders also disproportionately come from deprived areas. The portfolio's substantive priorities include improving the experience of justice for victims and survivors, reducing reoffending and limiting the negative effects of short-term imprisonment, and prioritising our public services and delivering public service reform.

Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition

Budget Purpose

To make sure that Scotland's economy achieves net zero carbon emissions; to protect and enhance our environment, natural resources and transport infrastructure; and to support public transport, roads, accessible transport and active travel and lead on strategic infrastructure planning.

Primary national outcomes:



Communities



Economy



Environment



International

Key human rights:

- Right to an adequate standard of living
- Right to a healthy environment
- Right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

The work of the portfolio aims to make our public transport system more accessible, available, and affordable, with the costs of transport more fairly shared across government, business and society. Public transport services are important for and used more frequently by particular groups of people. Women, older people, younger people and those on lower incomes use bus services more.

Equality Impact assessments and Fairer Scotland Duty Impact Assessments on commitments in the portfolio highlight the potential benefits to protected groups.

Adapting to the challenge of climate change can have a disproportionate impact on equalities groups and those who are most vulnerable both through the actions taken to achieve Net Zero by 2045, and impacts being felt as a result of climate induced change. The Just Transition Planning Framework sets out our approach to ensuring existing inequalities are

tackled as we develop the plans referenced in the 'Programme for Government'. Co-design and engagement with vulnerable communities is integral to that process.

Domestic energy costs and fuel poverty are also likely to disproportionately affect those on lower incomes and particular groups such as disabled people, older people, and lone parents. The Heat in Buildings Bill will drive the decarbonisation of heat and boost the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes and buildings, helping to address these inequalities.

Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

Budget Purpose

To improve the opportunities for Scotland's rural and coastal areas, and island communities. Supporting food security and production in Scotland, whilst tackling both biodiversity loss and climate change.

Primary national outcomes:

-  Environment
-  Communities
-  Economy
-  Fair Work and Business

Key human rights:

- Right to protection of property
- Right to an adequate standard of living, including:
 - Right to adequate housing
 - Right to adequate food
 - Right to protection against poverty and social exclusion
 - Right to take part in cultural life
 - Right to a healthy environment, including right to benefit from healthy ecosystems that sustain human wellbeing; the rights of access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

The budget is aimed at supporting Rural and Island communities and also food security and production. Its spending is largely through sector-specific support for agriculture, forestry and fisheries. There is extensive on-going reform on the agricultural programme, which should help address both equalities issues and help tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, notably through the current Agriculture (Scotland) Bill.

This budget funds activities in Scotland's most fragile rural, coastal, and island communities. It has a direct and critical role in supporting them to thrive, and in preventing depopulation by encouraging and supporting people to continue to live and work on the land and at sea. This includes

supporting young people to stay in rural and island communities, to gain skills and employment in rural industries.

This investment may also help build community resilience by supporting businesses in key sectors which in turn helps to sustain local suppliers and manufacturers, especially food production, seafood and forestry.

The 'Less Favoured Area Support Scheme' (LFASS) in particular is available only in Scotland and seeks to keep people living and working in rural areas on farms and crofts with some of the lowest incomes in Scotland. Marine funding helps to support businesses and individuals in some of our most fragile coastal communities, including new entrants to fishing.

The 'Land Matching Service' works to link up young or new entrant farmers with land. This may help reduce age-related inequality within the sector, and also provide opportunities for older farmers to partner with younger people to set up joint ventures where they have no designated successor.

The Scottish Government is also developing a gender strategy for agriculture, and continues to fund the women in agriculture programme, to improve opportunities for women working in the sector and support training opportunities. This is important as most farms are still owned and managed by men.

The climate change focused spending, particularly on peatlands and forestry, will help both with CO2 mitigation and adaptation. This should help people with low incomes and/or with protected characteristics, particularly who live on Scotland's islands, who are disproportionately likely to suffer the negative consequences from climate change.

Social Justice

Budget Purpose

Create a fairer Scotland, tackle poverty and especially child poverty, deliver affordable housing, and promote equality and human rights.

Primary national outcomes:



Communities



Human Rights



Poverty



Children & Young People

Key human rights:

- Article 8: Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
- Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Article 14: Protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms
- an adequate standard of living
- social security
- freedom of thought, religion and expression
- equality and non-discrimination

Summary of how our budget impacts on equality and Fairer Scotland

We will invest £6.3 billion in Scottish Government benefits and payments in 2024-25, supporting over 1.2 million people, including the 'Carer Support Payment', a benefit which will help tackle inequalities around sex, and the 'Scottish Child Payment', improving the lives of over 300,000 children in low-income families across Scotland in 2024-25, and lifting an estimated 50,000 children out of relative poverty in 2023-24. Our disability benefits help mitigate the additional daily living or mobility costs that disabled people may have as a result of a disability or long-term health condition.

The budget will also support implementation of our second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, 'Best Start, Bright Futures', supporting families at greatest risk of poverty. Our 'Cash First Programme' will help reduce the demand for emergency food parcels. The budget will also support income

maximisation, welfare and debt advice services, supporting at least 40,000 people with free debt advice including in education, health and community settings.

The budget will support 'Discretionary Housing Payments', which are a vital tool to safeguard tenancies and prevent homelessness among low income households.

Funding for the Directorate of Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights has a direct benefit. This includes the 'Equality and Human Rights Fund' which supports organisations to deliver direct work tackling inequality and discrimination. It supports infrastructure support and policy work, across Human rights and also in areas of protected characteristics. It also includes funding for initiatives and organisations that directly support the integration of newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland, as well as the provision of ongoing support for those who require it.



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