

# **Fairer Scotland Action Plan**

## **Progress Report 2018**

**December 2018**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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# MINISTERIAL FOREWORD



I am delighted to introduce this Progress Report on the Fairer Scotland Action Plan, which launched in October 2016 with 50 concrete actions to build a fairer and more equal country.

This Plan is our commitment to immediate action in this parliamentary term and to laying the foundations of a longer-term goal for 2030 to create the fairer and more prosperous Scotland we all want to see. This fairer Scotland will be one where poverty and inequality are seen to have been tackled. It will be one where there is genuine equality of opportunity, where all children and young people can realise their aspirations, and where there is support for all those who need it. This Scottish Government is determined to deliver that fairer and more prosperous society.

This second annual report outlines the progress we have made since the last report in November 2017. It reflects our determination to take a Scotland-wide approach to tackling poverty, which is unacceptable anywhere but particularly in a wealthy country like ours.

A strong example is our cross-government commitment to eradicate child poverty. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 – first set out in the Fairer Scotland Action Plan – was passed unanimously in the Scottish Parliament in November 2017. This landmark piece of legislation positions Scotland as leading the UK on tackling child poverty. In March this year, we published Every Child, Every Chance, our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan for 2018-22, supported by the £50 million Tackling Child Poverty Fund and a range of other investments. A new income supplement for low income families and a major programme of intensive employment support for low income parents are clear statements of our ambition to make a real difference to children's lives. And we are already delivering – introducing the first Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payments before Christmas this year, which provides £600 on the birth of a first child and £300 on the birth of any further children; and reaching an agreement with local authorities to introduce a national minimum school clothing grant of £100.

I am proud of the progress we have made across government on a fairer Scotland over the past two years, but there is a lot still to do. I am absolutely committed to doing everything I can to deliver on this agenda.

Finally, I am reminded that the title of the first action plan was: “It Takes All of Us to Build a Fairer Scotland”. Of course that still remains the case – creating a fairer Scotland needs all of us to work together – and as a government, we will continue to work with everyone who shares our vision. And, on that note, I would like to thank all those organisations who continue to deliver on the Fairness Pledges they made in 2016, supporting our commitment to the people of Scotland to change our society for the better.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Aileen Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

**AILEEN CAMPBELL**  
**CABINET SECRETARY FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

# **CONTENTS**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1. A FAIRER SCOTLAND FOR ALL**

### **2. AN END TO CHILD POVERTY**

### **3. A STRONG START FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **4. FAIRER WORKING LIVES**

### **5. A THRIVING THIRD AGE**

### **6. RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY**

### **7. FAIRNESS PLEDGES**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fairer Scotland Action Plan contained 50 concrete actions to reduce poverty and tackle inequality. This summary contains a short update on each action, with more detail in the main body of the report.

## **1. Introduce a new socio-economic duty on public bodies**

The Fairer Scotland Duty, a new responsibility for the public sector on tackling inequalities, came into force from April 2018.

## **2. Provide new funding so that people with experience of living in poverty can speak out, tackle stigma and push for change to public services**

Three community bodies have now been set up, modelled on the Poverty Truth Commission, in Dundee, North Ayrshire and Shetland. These will help people with lived experience of poverty have influence in local decision-making.

## **3. Establish a Poverty and Inequality Commission in 2017/18**

The Commission was launched in July 2017. It is moving to become a statutory public body from July 2019.

## **4. Invest £29 million in new programmes to tackle poverty**

We are investing in local communities and third sector organisations to develop and test innovative approaches to tackling poverty. Almost £13 million has been awarded from the European Social Fund to deliver two programmes; Aspiring Communities Fund and Growing the Social Economy.

## **5. Take action to tackle the ‘poverty premium’**

A key action here includes the roll out of the Financial Health Check, launched in November 2018, helping low income families maximise their incomes, and a new strand of work to help women access free sanitary products.

## **6. Deliver 100% superfast broadband access by 2021**

The aim of this programme - to extend fibre broadband access to at least 95% of premises across Scotland by the end of 2017 - has been met. We are committed to delivering 100% superfast broadband access across the whole of Scotland.

## **7. Do more to help people to have a say in their local areas**

In October 2017, we agreed with COSLA that by 2020-21, at least 1% of council budgets will be subject to participatory budgeting. This will give more local people a direct say in how almost £100 million of public money will be spent in their area.

## **8. Make democratic institutions more representative of the communities they serve**

The Access to Elected Office Fund will continue to support disabled candidates stand for the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021. We are on track to have helped 120 disabled people into internships by 2021.

**9. Reform public services to deliver the highest quality service to users, with dignity and respect at their core**

A range of action is taking place to support welfare reform in Scotland. For example, the views of those involved in Experience Panels, which involve people with direct personal experience of the current benefits system, have helped to identify key themes to be considered in the new social security system.

**10. Establish an Advisory Council on Women and Girls**

The Council held its inaugural meeting on 6 December 2017 and is currently working on its annual report to the First Minister due to be published in January 2019, which will include recommendations for progressing gender equality.

**11. Make sure that refugee families can access crisis grants quickly and efficiently**

Delivery of Family Reunion Crisis Grants began on 14 May 2018, providing financial support families require to meet their basic needs before they are able to access welfare benefits.

**12. Take forward the implementation of the Race Equality Framework**

The Programme Board established to oversee the implementation of the Race Equality Action Plan first met in August 2018. A Race Equality conference was held on 11 December in 2018 at which progress was reported.

**13. Review and reform gender recognition law so it is in line with international best practice for people who are Transgender or Intersex**

Following a consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004 in Scotland, legislation on gender recognition will be brought forward in this parliamentary session.

**14. Deliver more warm and affordable homes**

We are investing over £3 billion over the current parliamentary term to deliver at least 50,000 affordable homes, of which 35,000 will be for social rent. Since the start of this Parliamentary term we have approved 25,357 affordable homes, started 23,999 of these and completed 19,400.

**15. Deliver improved services for tenants in the private rented sector**

The new Private Residential Tenancy, commenced on 1 December 2017, gives tenants greater security, stability and predictability and enables them to exercise their rights without fear of eviction. Local authorities can also apply to Scottish Ministers to cap rents in areas where rents are rising above average. A new framework for regulating letting agents is now in place, and guidance has been provided to practitioners involved in taking forward enforcement and prosecution activity in the private rented sector.

**16. Build on Scotland's world-leading homelessness rights**

70 recommendations have been proposed by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group. This is supported by five year investment of £50 million into the Ending Homelessness Together Fund, of which £21 million is allocated to help people with multiple and complex needs, and an additional £20 million for addiction services.

### **17. Make social security fairer where we can**

The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 requires Ministers to co-design a social security charter with the people of Scotland and to develop a strategy to encourage the take-up of assistance. Over £125 million will be spent in 2018-19 on welfare mitigation and measures to help protect those on low incomes, over £20 million more than in the previous year. People in Scotland have choices over how often their Universal Credit award is made and to whom the housing costs in their Universal Credit award are paid.

### **18. Do more to help carers as soon as we have the ability**

With the first payments made in September 2018, Carer's Allowance Supplement (CAS) is the first social security benefit to be delivered in Scotland. CAS will increase Carer's Allowance by £8.50 (13%) in 2018-19 to £73.10 per week, an investment of over £30 million per year. The Young Carer Grant is a new £300 payment which will be paid from autumn 2019 to young carers aged 16 and 17, and 18 if still at school, caring for 16 or more hours per week and who do not currently qualify for Carer's Allowance.

### **19. Work with a range of partners to help people claim the benefits they are entitled to**

The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 places statutory requirements on Scottish Ministers to take certain steps to increase the take-up of benefits provided via the Scottish social security system. The Scottish Government is required to publish and periodically revise a strategy for promoting take-up of assistance. Our Financial Health Check was launched on 2 November 2018 and provides personalised advice to help families and older people with benefit uptake to maximise incomes.

### **20. Work to make Scotland a Good Food Nation by enabling more people to have access to affordable, healthy, nutritious food, in a dignified way**

Building on the dignified food principles, our Fair Food Fund budget has been continuously increasing, and is now £1.5 million. In 2019-20, it will be £3.5 million - with £2 million of this funding being targeted to support children and families experiencing food insecurity during school holidays. We provided FareShare with funding of £200,000 in 2018-19 to support the redistribution of high quality surplus food from the food industry to people affected by food poverty.

### **21. Recruit at least 250 Community Links Workers to work with GP surgeries to connect people with local services and support**

In 2017, we reached our aim to establish at least 40 Community Links Workers working in practices in some of our most deprived communities. There are currently 56 Community Link Workers in place across 72 GP practices.

### **22. Extend home visiting services for families with young children**

We remain on target to create 500 additional Health Visitor posts by the end of 2018.

### **23. Extend the 'Childsmile' programme to reach even more comparatively deprived communities**

Funding of £327,000 will support three additional Childsmile teams to deliver the extended Childsmile programme which began at the start of the 2018-19 academic year.

**24. Make better use of community-based interventions to reduce re-offending further and to help people move on from offending**

The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Bill sets out electronic monitoring arrangements for individuals to remain in the community rather than in custody. Scotland's focus on community sentences has helped reduce reconviction rates over the last decade to an 19-year low, and we will continue to work with partners to prevent re-offending and to ensure community sentences and non-court disposals are available.

**25. Introduce a Bill to establish domestic abuse as a specific offence**

The Domestic Abuse Bill was introduced to parliament in March 2017 and became the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 in March the following year. The Act will introduce a new criminal offence of domestic abuse that explicitly criminalises psychological, as well as physical, abuse and will bring in a range of new safeguards.

**26. Introduce a new Child Poverty Bill**

The Child Poverty Bill was introduced to parliament in February 2017 and became the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 in December. The Act requires Scottish Ministers to meet ambitious child poverty targets by 2030 and in March 2018, we published our first delivery plan to help us do that.

**27. Introduce a Baby Box to help reduce the costs of providing for a child in the early days and weeks of life that some families may find challenging**

We introduced the first baby box of essential items in August 2017. 52,065 baby boxes were gifted in the first year, with an 85% uptake by parents.

**28. Create a new Best Start Grant to bring together the system for Healthy Start food vouchers and the UK Sure Start Maternity Grant when powers transfer to Scottish Ministers**

The new Best Start Grant provides vital financial help to parents in the early years, with the Pregnancy and Baby Grant already introduced in time for Christmas, more than six months earlier than originally stated.

**29. Increase entitlement to free early learning and childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as those 2 year olds that stand to benefit most, to 1140 hours per year by 2020**

Scottish Ministers and COSLA leaders reached a landmark agreement in April 2018 on a multi-year revenue and capital funding package to fully fund the expansion of early learning and childcare. We have published an Early Learning and Childcare Quality Action Plan; we have launched our national workforce recruitment marketing campaign; and are providing £2 million to train staff to support disabled children or children with additional support needs.

**30. Reduce the costs of school for low income parents**

Starting from the 2018-19 school year, we reached an agreement with local authorities to introduce a national minimum school clothing grant of £100 per child.

### **31. Make the Council Tax system fairer for low income families**

We enhanced the Council Tax Reduction scheme from April 2017 for families with children. Around 46,000 households now benefit from this measure. By the end of this financial year, we will have invested over £1.4 billion in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme since 2013, helping around half a million households every year to pay their council tax bill.

### **32. Ensure that every nursery in our most deprived areas has an additional qualified teacher or childcare graduate**

Working with local authorities, we will ensure that nurseries in Scotland's 20% most deprived areas will benefit from an additional teacher or early years graduate.

### **33. Make real progress in closing the attainment gap during the lifetime of this Parliament and to eliminate it, as far as we can, over the next decade**

In 2018-19, Pupil Equity Funding of £120 million will go to schools to improve attainment; £50 million to the Attainment Challenge Authorities and Schools Programmes to support work in areas of high deprivation; and £8.2 million will support a new fund to help improve educational outcomes and attainment for care-experienced children and young people.

### **34. Do more to address bullying in schools – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying**

We have published updated anti-bullying guidance and are committed to working with the Time for Inclusive Education campaign to deal with LGBTI bullying, discrimination and prejudice in schools. We continue to fund *respectme* and have provided LGBT Youth Scotland with additional funding in 2018-19 to deliver more teacher training on LGBT inclusion.

### **35. Tackle poverty directly for some of our most vulnerable children by delivering parity of child allowances between kinship and foster carers**

We are providing additional funding of £10.1 million a year to enable local authorities to pay kinship care allowance at the same rate as paid to foster carers.

### **36. Take action to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021**

With youth unemployment figures at 28,000 in May 2018, the Developing Young Workforce programme has achieved the target to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021.

### **37. Significantly increase the numbers of young people getting industry experience while still at school to help them kick-start a successful career in their chosen field**

We are continuing to increase vocational provision for young people in the senior phase of the Developing Young Workforce programme, including offering 30,000 Modern Apprenticeship opportunities by 2021.

### **38. Widen access to university**

We are making good progress on our commitment that students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent 20% of entrants to higher education by 2030. Following the independently chaired Student Support Review, we have

increased the care experience bursary to £8,100 and extended this to students studying in further education from 2018-19.

**39. Introduce a Job Grant for young people aged 16-24 who have been out of work for six months or more**

We are working to introduce a Job Grant to young people aged 16-24 who have been out of paid employment for six months or more. The grant will be a one off payment of either £100 or £250 for individuals with children, and a travel element to help with travel costs for the first three months of employment.

**40. Ensure that support for housing costs is not taken away from young people aged 18-21**

From April 2017, the Scottish Government has had a scheme in place to support those affected by removal of automatic entitlement to the housing element of Universal Credit for 18-21 year olds. The scheme allows those affected to receive support from local authorities, either through access to an exemption from the DWP or via the Scottish Welfare Fund.

**41. Help Young Scot to make the National Entitlement Card smart ready for 11-25 year olds**

Using the Young Scot National Entitlement Card, a pilot offering free transport to Modern Apprentices is being implemented in Scotland.

**42. Do more to promote the Living Wage**

The Scottish Government is providing £340,000 in 2018-19 to the Poverty Alliance Scotland to deliver the Scottish Living Wage Accreditation Initiative. There are now over 1,300 Accredited Living Wage Employers in Scotland. Scotland remains the best performing of all four UK countries, with the highest proportion of employees paid the Living Wage or more (80.6%).

**43. Do more to help people in Scotland work flexibly**

We continue to fund Family Friendly Working Scotland, an organisation which offers practical support to employers and shares best practice while raising awareness of the benefits around flexible and family friendly working in Scotland through a range of programmes and campaigns.

**44. Improve employment services for disabled people**

On 11 December 2018, we launched A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan which sets out our initial actions for delivering our ambitious target to reduce the disability gap by at least half and the timescale for achieving this.

**45. Launch a pilot 'Returners' project help bring experienced women back into the workplace after a career break**

We have awarded nearly £50,000 to Equate Scotland to provide 40 women with support to re-enter the STEM labour market, and more than £185,000 to a further six projects to address the under-representation of women in the finance, security and manufacturing sectors.

**46. Tackle discrimination on pregnancy and maternity leave in the workplace**

The Scottish Government has developed a communications strategy around the benefits of employers having positive pregnancy and maternity policies and is helping to ensure websites such as Ready Steady Baby, NHS Inform and The Parent Club include links to relevant pregnancy and maternity guidance.

**47. Help those older people who want to keep working after they have reached state pension age**

We continue to promote the uptake of the Living Wage which will benefit older workers financially. We are funding the Carer Positive Awards scheme to help workers with caring responsibilities to remain in employment, and Family Friendly Working Scotland to encourage flexible workplace practices. Three projects successful in securing funding in the first round of the Workplace Equality Fund will be targeting support to older workers.

**48. Help older people claim the financial support they are entitled to**

Our Financial Health Check, supported by £3.3 million over 2018-20, was launched on 2 November 2018, providing older people and low-income families with help to maximise their incomes by claiming the benefits and other support they are entitled to.

**49. Protect older people on low incomes through council tax reforms**

Our extension of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme will provide many pensioner households living in band E to H properties with additional support so that they do not pay more.

**50. Improve the funeral payments system so it helps more people, is more predictable and provides help more quickly**

We are introducing a number of changes, backed by around £2 million of additional Scottish Government funding annually, to widen the support available for funeral costs by 40% compared to the current payment. We are also working with local authorities, funeral directors and other organisations to develop guidance on funeral costs which aims to improve the availability, transparency and consistency of information on funeral charges to help people access information, compare prices and choose the funeral option that is right for them.

# INTRODUCTION

The Fairer Scotland Action Plan is the Scottish Government's response to the Fairer Scotland conversation that involved 7,000 people at more than 200 public events throughout 2015 and 2016.

The Plan lays out our vision “to build a better country – one with low levels of poverty and inequality, genuine equality of opportunity, stronger life chances and support for all those who need it.”

The Plan is built on five high-level ambitions:

- **A FAIRER SCOTLAND FOR ALL**
- **ENDING CHILD POVERTY**
- **A STRONG START FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE**
- **FAIRER WORKING LIVES**
- **A THRIVING THIRD AGE**

At the heart of the Plan are **50 FAIRNESS ACTIONS FOR THIS PARLIAMENTARY TERM** that will help us meet these ambitions, covering policy issues across government.

This report documents the progress we have made on each action since October 2016 with specific reference to progress made since our last update in November 2017. The following chapters also include an update on the new actions introduced in the 2017 Progress Report.

## FOCUS ON POVERTY

Poverty was a central focus to the fairer Scotland discussions – with a strong sense that society should be doing everything it can to reduce and ultimately end poverty.

Following sustained falls in poverty levels since the late nineties, they have once again started to rise, with many highlighting UK Government welfare reforms as a key driver of these increases. These reforms are having a detrimental impact on those living on low incomes, pushing up poverty rates and causing individuals to rely on emergency provision and charitable aid.

The Scottish Government's [2018 Annual Report on Welfare Reform](#) estimated that welfare reforms imposed by successive UK governments between 2010 and the 2018 UK Autumn Statement would result in an overall reduction in welfare spending in Scotland of £3.7 billion in 2020-21. Clearly it is beyond the ability of the Scottish Government to make up the money lost through these cuts.

As a government, we are investing over £125 million in 2018-19 to mitigate the worst impact of these reforms and to support those on low incomes – this represents a £20 million increase on spend last year. This spending is allocated as noted in the table below:

**Table 1 – Scottish Government budget allocations, rounded to nearest £1 million**

	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Investment [2018-19]</b>
Welfare Reform Mitigation	Investment directly made to mitigate against the impacts of welfare reform or reductions in spend due to UK Government cuts	£103m
Low Income Protection	Wider support to reduce the impact of living on a low income and ensure individuals can access essential goods and services	£24m
<b>Total</b>		<b>£127m</b>

However, this does not even begin to capture the wider investment which supports those on low incomes, such as:

- Over £20 million [2018-19] for our Empowering Communities Fund – supporting key local funding such as our Aspiring Communities Fund and Social Economy Growth Fund *[Action 4]*
- More than £3 billion committed to meet our 50,000 affordable homes target *[Action 14]*
- Investing around £990 million per year by 2021-22 to ensure that every child can access 1140 hours of fully funded early learning and childcare. *[Action 29]*
- £1.4 billion investment in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme since 2013 *[Action 31]*
- £750 million for the Attainment Scotland Fund in this parliamentary term *[Action 33]*
- £25 million investment [2018-19] on Educational Maintenance Allowance;
- £50 million for our Tackling Child Poverty Fund [2018-22]; of which £12 million will support intensive employment support for parents, and
- An additional £20 million above UK Government funding in each year of Parliament to support Fair Start Scotland – committing up to £96 million overall.

# 1. A FAIRER SCOTLAND FOR ALL

## POVERTY & LOW INCOME

### **ACTION 1 – INTRODUCE A NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY ON PUBLIC BODIES**

This new duty – renamed the Fairer Scotland Duty so everyone is clear why it has been introduced – has been in operation since April 2018.

The duty is a new legal responsibility on Scottish Ministers and local authorities, the NHS and other public bodies to actively consider what more can be done to reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socio economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

Getting the key decisions right is particularly important to tackling poverty and inequality effectively. So we will monitor progress on implementing the new duty over the next year and provide resource to support this work.

### **ACTION 2 – PROVIDE NEW FUNDING SO THAT, ACROSS SCOTLAND, PEOPLE WITH EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN POVERTY CAN SPEAK OUT, TACKLE STIGMA AND PUSH FOR CHANGE TO PUBLIC SERVICES**

We are committed to ensuring people who have experienced poverty can influence national and local policy-making to help tackle the causes and consequences of poverty. That is why we have funded new community organisations making sure that, in three local areas, people with lived experience of poverty can get their voices heard.

We currently part-fund the Poverty Truth Commission, based in Glasgow, which has over 10 years' experience providing a platform to people with experience of poverty across Scotland. Based on this model, we have provided start-up funding of £60,000 for the three new bodies mentioned above: Dundee Fighting For Fairness, North Ayrshire Fair For All, and Shetland Voices For Equity.

We committed to further explore how we can help other areas set up similar organisations informed by good practise from existing Poverty Truth Commissions. The Scottish Government has recently provided funding to support the work of the newly established Edinburgh Poverty Commission. The Commission will define the long-term actions and responses needed to reduce poverty and inequality in Edinburgh and make recommendations for change to partners across the city, informed by the views and experiences of people affected by poverty who are at the heart of this work.

This year we also funded the Poverty Alliance to deliver Get Heard Scotland. This is a new programme designed to make sure that members of communities affected by poverty are able to get their voices heard on the policies and decisions that most impact their lives and the lives of people in their communities – both at national and local level.

### **ACTION 3 – ESTABLISH A POVERTY AND INEQUALITY COMMISSION IN 2017/18**

Scottish Ministers established the Poverty and Inequality Commission<sup>1</sup> on 3 July 2017, appointing the Chair and two Deputy Chairs. The Commission Chair then appointed additional members with a range of expertise, including individuals nominated by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Poverty Alliance and Poverty Truth Commission. The Commission worked rapidly to provide valuable advice to Ministers ahead of the first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan and has recently published advice on poverty in the school holidays. It is currently working on a range of other projects, including a follow-up on the plan itself.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out that the Commission must become a new public body so it can scrutinise progress towards the child poverty targets. Recruitment for the Chair of the new body is now underway, and recruitment of between four and eight members will commence in March 2019 so they are in place ahead of the statutory Commission going live on 1 July 2019.

### **ACTION 4 – INVEST £29 MILLION IN NEW PROGRAMMES TO TACKLE POVERTY**

This funding, supported by the European Social Fund, has enabled us to set up two new funds for communities and the third sector: the Aspiring Communities Fund and Growing the Social Economy.

The Aspiring Communities Fund supports communities to develop their own solutions to address poverty and inequality. To date, around 140 community-led projects have secured almost £13 million to deliver new or enhanced services to address local priorities and need, increase active inclusion and build on the assets of local communities to reduce poverty and promote inclusive growth.

Growing the Social Economy invests in third sector organisations and promotes the development and testing of social innovation approaches to tackle poverty. The Social Economy Growth Fund supports job creation and enables services to be expanded and new approaches developed and delivered to help disadvantaged individuals and families overcome financial and social exclusion. The Fund has awarded over £5 million to 33 projects. Over £3.5 million has been awarded to 49 collaborative partnership projects through the Social Innovation Fund to research, develop and test new ideas that tackle social problems. We intend to commit further funding in 2019.

#### Citizens Basic Income

Our 2017 Progress Report included a commitment to establish a new fund to support local areas to develop meaningful pilots to test aspects of Citizens Basic Income. Following this commitment, we have now awarded funding of £250,000 over two years to four pilot local authorities – Fife, Edinburgh, North Ayrshire and Glasgow – alongside assistance from Scottish Government analysts. This funding will support

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<sup>1</sup> [www.povertyinequality.scot](http://www.povertyinequality.scot)

the scoping out of small scale pilots which will help us understand the costs, benefits and savings of a Citizen's Basic Income in Scotland. The pilots, working in partnership with NHS Health Scotland and the Improvement Service, will provide a final business case outlining proposals to Scottish Ministers by March 2020.

## **ACTION 5 – TAKE ACTION TO TACKLE THE POVERTY PREMIUM**

The Scottish Government is committed to a range of action to tackle the 'poverty premium', the extra costs that people on low incomes pay to access essential goods and services. This includes the introduction of a Financial Health Check for families living on low incomes, providing access to free sanitary products, action on energy costs, and making affordable credit more easily available.

### Financial Health Check

Our Financial Health Check, supported by £3.3 million over 2018-20, was launched on 2 November 2018. Delivered by Citizens Advice Scotland and local bureaux, the Financial Health Check will offer personalised advice on 17 different elements to increase people's income, reduce household costs and tackle the 'poverty premium'. It will cover things like access to free school meals, school clothing grants, benefit uptake, council tax reduction uptake and cheaper deals on energy and other utilities. The new check is expected to help at least 15,000 households in Scotland each year.

This work will be supported by both local promotional work and a national campaign to raise low income families and older people's awareness of this service.

### Sanitary Products

Being able to access sanitary products is fundamental to securing equality, dignity and rights for women and to address the issue of 'period poverty'. In 2017, we said we would introduce a scheme to fund access to free sanitary products in schools, colleges and universities and we also committed to consider action to support those on low incomes. Sanitary products are now available for free in all schools, colleges and universities and, informed by the findings of a pilot scheme in Aberdeen which concluded in March 2018, the Scottish Government announced it is expanding access to free sanitary products across the country via FareShare and its network of community partners.

From the start of the 2018-19 academic term, the Scottish Government has committed £5.2 million to providing access to free sanitary products to students in all schools, colleges and universities in Scotland. We have worked in close partnership with COSLA, Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland to develop a set of guiding principles and agree on a funding model to deliver this commitment. This is a ground-breaking commitment to tackle the gender injustice of lack of access to sanitary products, and we are proud to be the first national government in the world to take action across all schools, colleges and universities.

## Energy Costs

In order to help low income consumers get a better deal on their fuel bills, the Scottish Government held the first Energy Summit in December 2016. It brought together energy companies and consumers, who are key partners in delivering a fairer Scotland, to challenge industry, consumer group representatives and the regulator to work together in pursuit of improved consumer outcomes. Following on from the first Summit, we wrote to energy companies to challenge them to identify further action they could take to help low income consumers get a better deal on their fuel bills. In recognition that a continued collaborative effort is needed to effectively tackle the poverty premium in the energy market, we reconvened the Energy Summit in January 2018. This work will help inform the development of a consumer vision and action plan to ensure our policy decisions respond to the needs and interests of energy consumers in Scotland.

We want to make it easier for everyone to be able to access affordable energy. At the heart of the Scottish Energy Strategy published in December 2017 is a commitment to “promote consumer engagement and protect consumers from excessive or avoidable costs, prevent new forms of social exclusion and promote the benefits of smarter domestic energy applications and systems”. We want to deliver a people-centred energy transition shaped by and for the people of Scotland, and are developing a vision and action plan to set out how we will do this with a focus on the disengaged and consumer in vulnerable circumstances. We intend to publish the energy consumer vision and action plan in Spring 2019.

Our ambition is to develop an approach to a public energy company which sells energy to customers at as low a price as possible and to offer people more choice, particularly those for whom fuel poverty is a real and present concern. In April we published the strategic outline case for an energy company. Since then we have been considering the approaches set out in that report and the consultants’ recommendations. In the Autumn we commissioned the outline business case to further investigate these proposals and to develop our understanding of the practical details, costs and benefits. Key stakeholders and partners such as local authorities are being involved in this process. Once completed, the outline business case will form the basis of a public consultation as to next steps.

## Affordable Credit

The poverty premium is where people on low incomes pay more for basic goods and services because they have limited choices. To help address the poverty premium, the Scottish Government has this year invested £1 million into Carnegie’s Affordable Credit Fund. This resource will enable not-for-profit lenders, such as Community Development Financial Institutions and Credit Unions, to provide access to mid-cost credit to low income households. Alongside this, these social lenders will offer wider financial inclusion advice and support, such as opening a bank account, debt advice and help in claiming benefits, alongside the loans to help increase borrowers’ financial sustainability. This investment is supported by a further £80,000 from the Scottish Government for organisations which have drawn down a loan from the Affordable Credit Fund to market their services.

## **ACTION 6 – DELIVER 100% SUPERFAST BROADBAND ACCESS BY 2021**

Good quality access to the internet is important for everyone in Scotland. The Scottish Government and our partners are investing over £400 million through the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme (DSSB). The aim of the programme - to extend fibre broadband access to at least 95% of premises across Scotland by the end of 2017 - was met. It has since exceeded this target, with DSSB coverage now reaching over 900,000 premises, extending coverage within the Highlands, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles.

However, we don't believe the roll-out should stop there. That's why we have committed to delivering 100% superfast broadband access across the whole of Scotland, backed by an initial investment of £600 million (including a contribution by the UK Government of £21 million). Procurement to roll out broadband access of 30 megabits per second or above to all premises in Scotland began in December 2017 and is on track for contract award in 2019.

## **PARTICIPATION, DIGNITY AND RESPECT**

### **ACTION 7 – DO MORE TO HELP PEOPLE TO HAVE A SAY IN THEIR LOCAL AREAS**

Since 2014, we have invested £6.5 million through our Community Choices Fund to support and promote 'participatory budgeting' (PB) as a way for local people to have a direct say in how public money is spent in their community. PB is delivered in partnership with local authorities, communities and third sector organisations, and across policy areas from policing to health and social care, transport and education. The Fund has supported thousands of community projects and helped 100,000 community members to participate in decisions about how money is spent locally.

Our agreement with COSLA in October 2017 that at least 1% of local authority budgets will be subject to PB by 2020-21 will give more people a say in how almost £100 million will be spent in their local area.

We are working with Glasgow Disability Alliance (GDA) on their commitment in the Fairer Scotland Action Plan to "actively encourage local authorities to ensure that disabled people can play a full part in the participatory budgeting process". In February 2018, GDA was commissioned to explore how disabled people can play a full and meaningful role in participatory budgeting processes and, as part of that work, the Budgeting for Equality action research report<sup>2</sup> was launched on 24 August 2018. This highlights the experiences and views of disabled people in relation to having their voices heard in decision making processes, and the findings of the report will help inform the development of a PB framework to reduce the inequalities faced by disabled people and improve outcomes.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://gda.scot/our-community/news/2018/8/24/budgeting-for-equality>

## **ACTION 8 – MAKE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE**

In 2017, we committed to further work with disability groups to remove the barriers to participation which prevent some people from standing for selection/election. This includes a £200,000 Access to Elected Office Fund, which supported 39 disabled candidates to stand for election in the 2017 local government elections. We will continue the Fund for the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021.

We also committed to setting up a new programme of 120 disability internships, which includes placements in the Scottish Parliament. We have delivered 28 in the first year of the programme and are on track to have helped 120 disabled people into internships by 2021.

Further, we have funded a coalition of equality organisations to develop practical tools, including the Equal Representation Tool which has now been launched, to help political parties to become more inclusive, and to increase representation of people with protected characteristics, including women, disabled people, LGBTI people, and those from minority ethnic communities. The Equal Representation Coalition meets regularly, with Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) providing secretariat support. At the last meeting of the Coalition, the Scottish Parliament expressed interest in facilitating a workshop on the tool for elected members.

## **ACTION 9 – REFORM PUBLIC SERVICES TO DELIVER THE HIGHEST QUALITY SERVICE TO USERS, WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT AT THEIR CORE**

High quality, person-centred public services play a crucial role in ensuring the wellbeing of people, families and communities across Scotland. Our ambitious programme of reform in Scotland, with its emphasis on prevention, integration and empowerment, provides a long-term strategy for ensuring that public services are sustainable and improve outcomes for the people of Scotland. We are working with our partners and communities to ensure people are empowered and fully engaged in the design and planning of the services that matter to them.

### Social Security

We remain committed to ensuring that fairness, dignity, respect and the views of those involved in Experience Panels (which involve people with direct personal experience of the current benefits system), underpins Scotland's new social security system. In February 2018, we published *About Your Benefits and You*,<sup>3</sup> a report based on the lived experience of 1,144 panel members across Scotland, and their priorities for the new system. The research has helped to identify key themes to be considered in the new system, what currently works well and areas for improvement.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/11/7769>

## Employability

In April 2018, we launched the Fair Start Scotland employment service which will provide tailored, person-centred support to a minimum of 38,000 people over the next five years. In response to feedback on other employment support services, sanctions will not be applied in this new voluntary service, embedding respect and fairness at its core to further support people to achieve their full potential through access to employment opportunities.

## Social Care

The Adult Social Care Reform Programme supports reforms to make adult social care sustainable for the future by identifying and highlighting good practice and supporting take-up across Scotland. We are developing, with Inclusion Scotland, an innovative approach to engaging with and seeking the views of people who have lived experience of using adult social care. The People-led Policy Group will involve core membership of up to 20 people, a wider panel of around 50 people, and will also draw on other networks including equality groups, older people's organisations, carers' organisations, impairment-specific charities, the Scottish Independent Living Coalition, and the Care Inspectorate amongst others.

## Local Governance

Our reform of public services includes devolving more power to a local level. In June 2018, the Scottish Government and COSLA jointly launched a Local Governance Review, the aim of which was to ensure local communities have more say about how public services in their area are run. The Local Governance Review will consider how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local government, and with communities. The review has two strands. Democracy Matters is a conversation about community decision making. The issues discussed as part of this conversation will help inform new legislation. At the same time, we will work with our public sector partners, such as local councils, to consider if increasing the powers they hold could improve outcomes for people.

## **EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **ACTION 10 – ESTABLISH AN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WOMEN AND GIRLS**

The First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girl's (the Council) held its inaugural meeting on 6 December 2017. The Council plays a key leadership role in raising awareness of gender inequality, acts as a champion for the rights of women and girls and is a catalyst for change. The Council's vision is of a Scotland which is recognised as a world leader for its commitment and action towards realising an equal society where all women and girls can reach their true potential. Louise Macdonald OBE, CEO of Young Scot, is the independent Chair of the Council and a membership announcement in November 2017 included a diverse range of 16

women, three of whom are 21 and under. The output of the inaugural meeting was the Council's initial three year strategy.<sup>4</sup>

The Council's work in 2018 has been focused on attitudes and culture change – in public life, in work and in learning systems. The Council is currently working on the outputs for their annual report to the First Minister due to be published in January 2019 and will include recommendations for progressing gender equality. In 2019, the Council's focus will be on policy coherence: the way in which policies are made and analysis of the way in which they work together.

The Council's model also includes mass engagement with Scotland to generate discussion and further awareness of the impact of gender inequality. The Council's digital platform<sup>5</sup> was launched on 1 June 2018. Every month features a spotlight on particular issues, with a mechanism for people to provide feedback built in.

### **ACTION 11 – MAKE SURE THAT REFUGEE FAMILIES CAN ACCESS CRISIS GRANTS QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY**

Delivery of Family Reunion Crisis Grants began on 14 May 2018 and supports the integration of refugee families arriving in Scotland under family reunion rules, who would otherwise be destitute during their first days in Scotland. They provide the financial support families require to meet their basic needs before they are able to access welfare benefits.

Family Reunion Crisis Grants are delivered through the Scottish Welfare Fund. Sponsors are able to make an application for a crisis grant before family members arrive in Scotland, with the same eligibility rules as currently apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund. Awards are paid in advance of the family's arrival.

In response to the Committee Inquiry on Destitution, Asylum and Insecure Immigration Status in Scotland and its report *Hidden Lives - New Beginnings*,<sup>6</sup> the Scottish Government is working with COSLA to update the Scottish guidance on No Recourse to Public Funds, Establishing Migrants' Access to Benefits and Local Authority Services.<sup>7</sup> The guidance assists local authority staff when they are approached for support by people with No Recourse to Public Funds, including families with children. The new guidance, due to be launched in early 2019, will be available online in a more user-friendly form and will provide information and practical tools to help with decision-making and service delivery. Alongside the updated guidance, the Scottish Government is supporting training and dissemination activities to promote the new guidance to key audiences, particularly frontline staff.

The Scottish Government believes that integration begins from day one of arrival for all asylum seekers and refugees. To support this, we ensure that asylum seekers and refugees have access to devolved services, such as health and education, to help them rebuild their lives. However, although Scotland plays its part in supporting

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<sup>4</sup> <https://onescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/NACWG-Priorities-2018-21.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://onescotland.org/equality-themes/advisory-council-women-girls/>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_Equal\\_Opps/Reports/EHRiC\\_3rd\\_Report\\_2017.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Equal_Opps/Reports/EHRiC_3rd_Report_2017.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/uploads/files/documents/final\\_guidance\\_document\\_-\\_layout.pdf](http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/uploads/files/documents/final_guidance_document_-_layout.pdf)

asylum seekers, the UK Government only funds integration support in local authorities in England. The Scottish Government is pressing the Home Office to ensure that all local authorities are funded fairly for the role they play in supporting asylum seekers and to find a long term solution to dealing with people at the end of the asylum process in a way that respects their dignity and rights.

## **ACTION 12 – TAKE FORWARD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RACE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK**

The Race Equality Action Plan, published in December 2017, builds on progress made through the Race Equality Framework. The Action Plan, informed by 72 recommendations in the Independent Race Equality Advisor’s report Addressing Race Inequality in Scotland: The Way Forward,<sup>8</sup> contains over 120 actions we will take over the course of this Parliament to secure better outcomes for minority ethnic communities. These are in areas such as employment, education, health, housing, poverty, community cohesion and safety, participation and representation, and Gypsy/Travellers.

The Scottish Government continues to work with stakeholders to monitor, coordinate and report on actions from the Action Plan, ensuring that it aligns with the overall aims of the Framework. The Race Equality Action Plan Programme Board, which oversees the implementation of the Action Plan, had its first meeting in August 2018, and the second meeting in November 2018. At these meetings the Programme Board reviewed the 75 actions planned for Year 1 and agreed that there needs to be a mechanism for measuring impact. The appointment of a Delivery Group, responsible for coordinating projects and actions from within each policy area, was agreed in principle.

A Race Equality conference was held on 11 December in 2018, at which progress against the Action Plan was reported. A conference will take place annually over the lifespan of the Action Plan to update stakeholders on progress made and, through engagement with stakeholders, to help inform the development of the next Action Plan for 2022-25.

## **ACTION 13 – REVIEW AND REFORM GENDER RECOGNITION LAW SO IT IS IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE TRANSGENDER OR INTERSEX**

The Scottish Government consultation on reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004 in Scotland closed on 1 March 2018 and received over 15,500 responses. Responses from organisations have been published alongside an update on the Scottish Government’s progress following the consultation.<sup>9</sup> The external analysis of responses was published on 23 November 2018,<sup>10</sup> and legislation on gender recognition will be brought forward in this parliamentary session.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/12/9088>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Justice/law/17867/gender-recognition-review>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/review-gender-recognition-act-2004-analysis-responses-public-consultation-exercise-report/>

## HOUSING

### **ACTION 14 – DELIVER MORE WARM AND AFFORDABLE HOMES IN THIS PARLIAMENT**

We are investing over £3 billion over the current parliamentary term to deliver at least 50,000 affordable homes, of which 35,000 will be for social rent. In 2018-19, over £756 million is available to increase the supply of affordable homes, and over £568 million of this has been allocated to council areas across Scotland. Increases will continue over the coming years, rising to £591 million in 2019-20 and £630 million in 2020-21. This will bring the overall funding allocated to councils for affordable housing to £1.79 billion over the three years to the end of March 2021.

Since the start of this Parliamentary term, we have approved 25,357 affordable homes, started 23,999 of these and completed 19,400. Total approvals over the 12 months to September 2018 have increased by 9% on the previous year, indicating an increase in the pipeline of supply. This investment is laying the foundations for achieving our target as affordable homes that have been approved or on which work has started will form the basis of completions later in the five year target period.

#### Fuel Poverty

The Scottish Government is committed to tackling fuel poverty to ensure everyone lives in a warm home that is affordable to heat, no matter where in Scotland they live. Progress on the Energy Efficient Scotland programme and the Scottish Energy Strategy is set out under action 5.

Following a public consultation, on 27 June 2018 the Scottish Government published the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill 2018. The Bill has the following aims:

- It sets a target that by 2040, no more than 5% of households will be in fuel poverty;
- It creates a new definition of fuel poverty that brings the definition closer to relative income poverty;
- It mandates the production of a new, long term fuel poverty strategy, to be published within a year of the relevant provision of the Bill being brought into force; and
- It requires reporting on the steps which have been taken and the progress made towards the 2040 target every five years from publication of the strategy.

The draft Fuel Poverty Strategy published alongside the Bill reflects the different needs of all of Scotland's urban, suburban, rural and remote communities. It sets out how we will work across government to tackle all four drivers of fuel poverty to improve people's lives. We will take forward a range of actions to help achieve this, including:

- Continuing work to ensure our funding is targeted on those most in need;

- Continuing to provide free and impartial advice on how best to use energy in the home as well as on energy efficiency schemes and funding, delivered by Home Energy Scotland;
- Ensuring consumers have advice and support on switching to the best offer available to help households reduce their fuel bills;
- Maximising incomes by taking forward the wider set of actions outlined in our Fairer Scotland Action Plan and our efforts to boost jobs in a low carbon economy;
- Delivering the ambition of a public energy company, which contributes to tackling fuel poverty; and
- Removing poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty, to be delivered through the approach set out in our Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map. Launched on 2 May, this sets out our vision that by 2040, our homes and buildings are warmer, greener and more efficient, meaning that they are more comfortable and easier to heat. The programme will help to keep bills affordable, improve health and wellbeing outcomes for our children and more vulnerable Scots, increase the productivity and competitiveness of our businesses, support jobs, and make a positive contribution to the Scottish economy, in a sustainable way.

## **ACTION 15 – DELIVER IMPROVED SERVICES FOR TENANTS IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR**

Over the past 12 months, we have introduced the biggest changes to private renting in Scotland for more than a generation.

The new Private Residential Tenancy, commenced on 1 December 2017, gives tenants greater security, stability and predictability. It is a modern, open-ended tenancy where landlords cannot evict a tenant simply because their tenancy agreement has reached its end date. This means that tenants can exercise their rights without fear of eviction. Instead, to end a tenancy, a landlord must use one or more of the 18 grounds for repossession and, if a tenant has lived in property for six months or more and is not at fault, must give the tenant 12 weeks' notice of this. Rent increases are limited to once every 12 months and tenants must be given three months' notice of any increase. If a tenant thinks the increase is unfair, they can challenge it, free of charge, by applying to a Rent Officer for rent adjudication.

For any disputes under the new tenancy, tenants can also apply at no charge to the new Housing & Property Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal, which delivers benefits of specialism, consistency and improved access to justice for tenants in the private rented sector.

From 1 December 2017, local authorities have a new valuable discretionary power which enables them to apply to Scottish Ministers to cap rents in areas where rents are rising above average and are having a detrimental impact on tenants and housing. Ministers can decide to cap rents increases in that area for up to five years for tenants with a private residential tenancy.

We are also taking a number of actions to improve standards for over 770,000 people who rely on the private rented sector to provide them with a home:

- Firstly, we have introduced a robust framework for the regulation of letting agents. New regulations came into force on 31 January 2018 which require mandatory registration, training and qualification requirements for letting agents and a comprehensive statutory Code of Practice, which will drive up standards in the industry and improve services for tenants.
- Secondly, we will introduce new requirements on landlords to strengthen the fit and proper person test. From summer 2019, landlords will have to confirm that they meet their legal obligations in relation to gas and electrical safety, the repairing standard and building insurance when they apply for registration.
- Finally, working with local authorities, Police Scotland, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service, we have published guidance for practitioners involved in taking forward enforcement and prosecution activity in the private rented sector. The guidance provides officers working in local authority private sector housing or licensing services and police officers with a range of information, advice and best practice on the different stages involved in taking action against a landlord's failings in property standards or management. The aim is to improve understanding of the range of powers available to the different parties and deliver a more consistent approach to enforcement across the country.

## **ACTION 16 – BUILD ON SCOTLAND'S WORLD-LEADING HOMELESSNESS RIGHTS**

The short-life Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, established in September 2017, delivered its final set of recommendations in June 2018. It has put forward a total of 70 recommendations on the actions, services and legislative changes needed for a whole system approach to prevent homelessness, and making it clear that this is the responsibility of all parts of the public sector.

This work is being supported by a £50 million Ending Homelessness Together Fund, available over five years, of which £21 million is being allocated to help local authorities accelerate towards rapid rehousing and Housing First for people with multiple and complex needs, and an additional £20 million for addiction services.

Our focus on prevention has already contributed toward a significant fall in homelessness applications. In 2010-11 there were 55,642 homelessness applications, compared to 34,972 in 2017-18 – a reduction of 37%.

We are working with COSLA and other partners to develop a detailed implementation plan and published a high level action plan in November 2018. The Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group has been reconvened with a remit to provide strategic oversight.

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND CRISIS SUPPORT

### **ACTION 17 – MAKE SOCIAL SECURITY FAIRER WHERE WE CAN**

The Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 was passed by the Scottish Parliament in April 2018. This Act provides the legislative framework for the delivery of a new Scottish social security system built on a set of founding principles that include human rights, dignity, respect, equality, non-discrimination and a role in contributing to the eradication of poverty. To ensure these principles are meaningfully reflected in operational delivery, the Act requires Ministers to co-design a social security charter with the people of Scotland that translates the principles into more specific and practical commitments. Ministers will be held to account for this charter by both the Scottish Parliament, who must approve the drafting (including any changes to it in the future) and an independent expert scrutiny body, who will assess the extent to which the charter is being fulfilled. This body – the Scottish Commission on Social Security – will seek to have regard to relevant human rights instruments when carrying out its assessment, and will also effectively provide a ‘whistle blowing’ role for stakeholders if they believe that the system is falling short of the charter’s standards. Consistent with the approach embodied in the principles and charter, the Act also places additional duties on Ministers to develop a strategy to encourage the take-up of assistance (see Action 19) and to have regard to the importance of communicating inclusively – with the aim of reducing stigma and making the system easier to navigate.

Furthermore, we are making social security fairer by having legislated that clients will not be required to undertake disability benefit assessments by private companies. Clients will have the right to be accompanied by a supporter if they need or want it during an assessment or meeting. We will not criminalise genuine errors and individuals. For any ‘in kind’ benefits that may be provided in the future, clients will always have the choice to receive benefit payments in cash if they so choose. Where a client is unhappy with a decision, assistance will continue to be paid at the original level until the re-determination and/or appeal is decided.

To ensure we have a truly fairer social security system in Scotland, we expect to spend over £125 million in 2018-19 on welfare mitigation and measures to help protect those on low incomes. This is over £20 million more than in the previous year. This mitigation is a necessary tool to try and limit the damage and harm caused by the UK Government welfare regime.

Moreover, since 4 October 2017, we have been giving people in Scotland the choice to receive their Universal Credit (UC) award either monthly or twice monthly and have the housing costs in their UC award paid directly to their landlord in both the private and social rented sector. A person can make just one or both choices. The UC Scottish choices are available to everyone claiming UC in a full service area in Scotland. Full service is where people receiving UC maintain their claim online, compared to live service where a UC claim is managed by phone. These choices enable people to have their UC award paid in a way that best suits their needs and preferences for managing their household budget; consequently, making it fairer.

## **ACTION 18 – DO MORE TO HELP CARERS AS SOON AS WE HAVE THE ABILITY**

Carer's Allowance Supplement (CAS) is the first social security benefit to be delivered in Scotland. CAS will increase Carer's Allowance (currently £64.60 per week) to £73.10 per week, an increase of 13% in 2018-19 and an investment of over £30 million per year. CAS will be paid as two six month lump sums of £221 in 2018-19 by Social Security Scotland to people who are resident in Scotland and in receipt of Carer's Allowance on two 'qualifying dates' per year, chosen by Scottish Ministers. The first payments were made to people in September.

The Young Carer Grant is part of a new package of support for young carers. From autumn 2019, a £300 annual payment will be made to carers aged 16 and 17 (and 18 if still at school) caring for 16 or more hours per week and who do not currently qualify for Carer's Allowance. The Scottish Government will work with young carers, including through Experience Panels, to ensure that the detailed policy and processes for the Young Carer Grant are shaped by the experiences, needs and priorities of those who will use it. Recruitment for the Young Carer Panel was launched on 25 January, Young Carers Awareness Day 2018.

The consultation on the draft regulations for the Young Carer Grant launched on 17 September 2018 and closed on 10 December 2018.

Recipients of the grant will also be eligible for free bus travel (subject to successful piloting) and a bespoke carers' element to the Young Scot National Entitlement Card is being developed, providing non-cash benefits for young carers aged 11-18.

## **ACTION 19 – WE WILL WORK WITH A RANGE OF PARTNERS TO HELP PEOPLE CLAIM THE BENEFITS THEY ARE ENTITLED TO**

Our Financial Health Check, supported by £3.3 million over 2018-20, was launched on 2 November 2018. This provides low-income families and older people with help to reduce costs and maximise incomes, for example, support to access cheaper deals on utilities and help in claiming the benefits they are entitled to.

Sections 3 of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 (Scottish Ministers' duty to promote take-up), 8 (Strategy to promote take-up) and 9 (Further provision about preparing strategies to promote take-up) place statutory requirements on Scottish Ministers to take certain steps in relation to increasing the take-up of benefits provided via the Scottish social security system.

Speaking in the Scottish Parliament on 25 April when the 2018 Act was passed, the then Minister for Social Security, Jeane Freeman MSP said "[These provisions] build on the duty to promote take-up of assistance by requiring the Government to publish and periodically revise a strategy for promoting take-up... [This will include the] steps the Government will take proactively over the strategy's lifetime to boost take-up rates [to] ... enshrine in law the Scottish Government's commitment to ensuring that everyone gets the assistance that they are entitled to through our social security system."

Since the legislation was passed, the Scottish Government has been working to deliver its statutory requirements to promote take-up. The first strategy will be published within a year of the relevant section of the 2018 Act coming into force (which occurred on 22 October 2018).

### **ACTION 20 – WORK TO MAKE SCOTLAND A GOOD FOOD NATION BY ENABLING MORE PEOPLE TO HAVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS FOOD, IN A DIGNIFIED WAY**

We are continuing to tackle food insecurity as an integrated part of our wider Good Food Nation vision. In the Fairer Scotland Action Plan, we committed to help more people get access to affordable, healthy, nutritious food, in a dignified way. Building on the dignified food principles identified in Dignity: Ending Hunger Together In Scotland,<sup>11</sup> our Fair Food Fund budget has been continuously increasing, and is now £1.5 million. In 2019-20 it will be £3.5 million – with £2 million of this being targeted to support children and families experiencing food insecurity during the school holidays. The Fund continues to support community organisations and food banks to transition away from charitable approaches as the only or primary response, and to move towards more dignified and rights-based approaches.

We also continue to support FareShare (£200,000 in 2018-19) to redistribute high quality surplus food from the food industry to community organisations supporting people affected by food insecurity. Through this activity, we will further develop our understanding of what practical delivery of dignified approaches looks like to inform future support.

At the same time, we continue to tackle the causes of food insecurity by maximising incomes and making it easier for families on a low income to access healthy, nutritious food.

## **HEALTH**

### **ACTION 21 – RECRUIT AT LEAST 250 COMMUNITY LINKS WORKERS TO WORK WITH GP SURGERIES TO CONNECT PEOPLE WITH LOCAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT**

In 2017, we reached our aim to establish at least 40 Community Links Workers (CLWs) working in practices in some of our most deprived communities. Fifty-six CLWs are already in place, working across 72 GP practices, connecting people with local services and support.

As we work towards our target of 250 CLWs by the end of this Parliament, and as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding, Integration Authorities have outlined in their Primary Care Improvement Plans how they propose to develop these

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/06/8020>

services locally. The roles CLWs undertake will be consistent with assessed local need and priorities.

### Frank's Law

'Frank's Law', named after the campaign led by footballer Frank Kopel's widow, is the extension of free personal care to everyone who is assessed as needing it, regardless of age. In 2017, we committed to implementing Frank's Law by April 2019, an initiative which is thought to benefit at least 9,000 families in Scotland. An Implementation Advisory Group (IAG), set up in December 2017, will consider issues around the implementation of the extended policy, including the possible increase in demand and costs for uptake of services, interactions with the benefits system and with children's services, impact on local authorities' eligibility criteria, and to assist in drafting guidance for local authorities and service users. The IAG will be supported by a Finance Sub Group which was put in place in June 2018.

From 1 April 2019, free personal care will be provided to all adults under the age of 65 who are assessed by their local authority as needing this service.

### **ACTION 22 – EXTEND HOME VISITING SERVICES FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN**

We remain on target to expand the Family Nurse Partnership programme to all eligible young mothers and create 500 additional Health Visitor posts, an increase of almost 50%, by the end of 2018. At 30 September 2018 there were at least 414.3 additional Health Visitors than there were in 2014.

A core programme of visits and child health reviews by Health Visitors will also be available to all families to further reduce health and social inequalities by reaching more families, more often. In addition to improving child health and wellbeing overall, this will help us better respond to needs of children and families, support development of parenting capacity and improve access to other services and support.

### **ACTION 23 – EXTEND THE 'CHILDSMILE' PROGRAMME TO REACH EVEN MORE COMPARATIVELY DEPRIVED COMMUNITIES**

The Childsmile Programme of supervised tooth brushing and fluoride varnish application for nursery and primary 1 and 2 children has been expanded to nurseries and schools in the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland. This means that the programme will now include additional areas of Ayrshire and Arran and Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Funding of £327k per annum has been put in place to support this with the roll-out commencing in the new school term in August 2018.

## JUSTICE

### **ACTION 24 – MAKE BETTER USE OF COMMUNITY-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE RE-OFFENDING FURTHER AND TO HELP PEOPLE MOVE ON FROM OFFENDING**

The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 22 February 2018. It provides for additional uses of electronic monitoring (EM) of offenders, and will consider ways in which the current use of EM could be expanded and new technology that could be used.

Evidence shows that community sentences are more effective than short-term imprisonment at reducing re-offending and can enable people to maintain housing, employment and family contacts, which all support desistance from offending. 51% of offenders imprisoned for 12 months or less are re-convicted within a year, compared with 31% of those given Community Payback Orders (CPOs). Scotland's focus on robust community sentences has helped reduce reconviction rates over the last decade to an 19-year low. CPOs also deliver real benefits for communities.

We have protected justice social work funding for local authorities at record levels of around £100 million per year, and will work with Community Justice Scotland, Social Work Scotland, local authorities and partners to prevent re-offending and to ensure robust and credible community sentences and non-court disposals are available.

We are continuing to develop a progressive new model for the female custodial estate, with a smaller national women's prison and local community-based custody units. This model will include access to intensive support to help overcome issues such as alcohol, drugs, mental health and domestic abuse trauma which evidence shows can often be a driver of offending behaviour. The Scottish Prison Service is currently working towards timescales to achieve the opening of the first two community custody units and the new national prison by the end of 2020.

### **ACTION 25 – INTRODUCE A BILL TO ESTABLISH DOMESTIC ABUSE AS A SPECIFIC OFFENCE**

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 was passed by the Scottish Parliament in February 2018 and is likely to come into force in early 2019. It will introduce a new criminal offence of domestic abuse that explicitly criminalises psychological, as well as physical, abuse. The Act will also bring in a range of new safeguards as part of the criminal justice process, such as extending new protections to children affected by domestic abuse offending and requiring the courts to always have regard to victim safety when sentencing domestic abuse perpetrators.

## 2. ENDING CHILD POVERTY

### AN AMBITION TO END CHILD POVERTY

#### **ACTION 26 – INTRODUCE A CHILD POVERTY BILL**

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Bill was introduced in February 2017 and the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 received Royal Assent on 12 December the same year. The Act sets in statute ambitious income-based targets towards the eradication of child poverty in Scotland.

On 29 March 2018, the Scottish Government published Every Child, Every Chance: The Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan – 2018-22,<sup>12</sup> the first delivery plan due under the Act. The Plan sets out a range of action, across government portfolios, to address the key drivers of child poverty: income through work, household costs and income through social security. The Plan also takes account of the need to help families in other ways, as children and young people in poverty now may be parents themselves in 2030; and to work closely with our partners to deliver on our ambitions.

Key commitments within the Plan include £12 million investment in new parental employment support, a new agreed minimum amount for the School Clothing Grant of £100 and a commitment to bringing forward a new income supplement for low income families. Progress on both the delivery of actions and against the 2030 targets will be published by June 2019.

In last year's progress report, we outlined the establishment of a £50 million Tackling Child Poverty Fund aligned to the period of the first Delivery Plan. This has now been established and the Plan outlines investment decisions to date, to make progress on the targets. Almost half of this fund has already been committed with the remainder being invested in 2020 and 2021.

### MAXIMISING FAMILY INCOMES

#### **ACTION 27 – INTRODUCE A BABY BOX TO HELP REDUCE THE COSTS OF PROVIDING FOR A CHILD IN THE EARLY DAYS AND WEEKS OF LIFE THAT SOME FAMILIES MAY FIND CHALLENGING**

The baby box was introduced on 15 August 2017 and, in the first year of the programme, 52,065 baby boxes had been gifted, with an 85% uptake by parents.

Scotland's baby box strongly signals our determination that every child, regardless of their circumstances, should get the best start in life. Every baby born and registered in Scotland is eligible for a box, which is full of essential items needed in the first six months of a child's life. We will continue to work on promoting the box and

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/everychild>

encouraging expectant parents to register to ensure uptake remains high as the baby box becomes a normal part of pregnancy and birth across Scotland.

### **ACTION 28 – CREATE A NEW BEST START GRANT**

We want to accelerate the help we can give to new families so that every child has the best start in life. Therefore we have brought forward the launch of the Best Start Grant Pregnancy and Baby Payment by six months. First applications were taken on 10 December and first payments made before Christmas. By providing £600 on the birth of their first child and £300 on the birth of any further children, we are putting more money into the pockets of families on lower incomes than the UK Government equivalent scheme. By paying families on lower incomes more money more quickly, we will support thousands of children across Scotland. This is the first step in our delivery of the Best Start Grant. Families get a further £250 for each of their children at key points in their early years, for early learning at the age of two or three and at around the time of starting school, by summer 2019.

### **ACTION 29 – INCREASE ENTITLEMENT TO FREE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE FOR ALL 3 AND 4 YEAR OLDS, AS WELL AS THOSE 2 YEAR OLDS THAT STAND TO BENEFIT MOST, TO 1140 HOURS PER YEAR BY 2020**

The Scottish Government is committed to almost doubling early learning and childcare (ELC) entitlement to 1140 hours per year by 2020 for all three and four year olds, and eligible two year olds. In March 2017 we published A Blueprint for 2020: 2017-18 Action Plan.<sup>13</sup> This set out the policy vision and framework for delivering the expansion of the ELC entitlement.

To support the delivery of this transformative change, Scottish Ministers and COSLA leaders reached a landmark agreement on a multi-year revenue and capital funding package in April 2018. Under this agreement, we will provide local authorities with additional recurring revenue funding of £567 million per year by 2021-22, the first full financial year of the expansion, and £476 million of capital funding over four financial years from 2017-18 to 2020-21 inclusive.

A new Funding Follows the Child approach will be introduced from 2020, which will be underpinned by a National Standard that all providers delivering the funded entitlement will have to meet. This will ensure a high quality experience for children, whilst placing choice in the hands of parents and carers. We consulted jointly with COSLA on the new National Standard from March to June 2018, and will set out the final version by the end of 2018.

### **ACTION 30 – REDUCE THE COSTS OF SCHOOL FOR LOW INCOME PARENTS**

We are taking further action to reduce the cost of school for low income parents. For example, earlier this year we reached an agreement with local authorities to introduce a national minimum school clothing grant of £100. Previously, the amount paid varied greatly across local authorities, with the lowest grant being £40. The new

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00515637.pdf>

minimum grant has applied across all of Scotland from the start of the 2018-19 academic year.

As part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, we have committed to providing Pupil Equity Funding until the end of the Parliamentary term, with £120 million being made available in both 2017-18 and 2018-19. This funding enables schools to tackle inequality and many are using this funding to help reduce the cost of the school day and its impacts on attainment.

The Scottish Government is also providing £31,500 of funding to the Child Poverty Action Group in 2018-19. This funding will allow them to continue to work with schools and authorities across Scotland to promote awareness of the financial barriers that pupils from low income families face at school.

We will continue to fund Young Scot to pilot a three year project (2017-18 to 2019-20) aimed at closing the poverty related attainment gap. By utilising the National Entitlement Card, Young Scot will deliver targeted and bespoke local entitlements and opportunities, focused on health and wellbeing, tackling inequalities, improving attainment and challenging rural poverty. Young Scot are working with local authorities in Renfrewshire, Highland and North Ayrshire to test the potential for the Young Scot Card to target benefits and opportunities at young people experiencing poverty.

### **ACTION 31 – MAKE THE COUNCIL TAX SYSTEM FAIRER FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES**

The Scottish Government has taken a number of steps to make Council Tax fairer. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme ensures that low income families are not required to meet a Council Tax liability they cannot afford. We enhanced the Council Tax Reduction scheme from April 2017 for families with children and around 46,000 households now benefit from this measure. By the end of this financial year, we will have invested over £1.4 billion in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme since 2013, helping around half a million households every year to pay their council tax bill. On average, households in receipt of assistance from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme have had their council tax bill reduced by almost £700 a year.

### **HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL**

#### **ACTION 32 – ENSURE THAT EVERY NURSERY IN OUR MOST DEPRIVED AREAS HAS AN ADDITIONAL QUALIFIED TEACHER OR CHILDCARE GRADUATE**

The Scottish Government believes that children receiving early learning and childcare (ELC) must have access to highly qualified staff with expertise in early childhood learning and development. This is particularly true for young children who face the greatest disadvantages where additional support may be needed to deliver on our ambition to close the attainment gap.

We committed to working with local authorities to ensure that nurseries in Scotland's most deprived areas will benefit from an additional graduate (either a teacher or early years graduate with or working towards, for example, the BA in Childhood Practice). This commitment has created 435 new graduate level opportunities across Scotland. The posts have been allocated across authorities based on their share of nurseries in the 20% most deprived postcodes, with each local authority benefitting from at least one new post.

To ensure that this commitment benefits as many children as possible, local authorities were given flexibility to draw on their local data to prioritise how they allocate their additional teachers or graduates across settings. Local authorities submitted action plans in September 2017 setting out how they proposed to deliver the commitment in their area.

The Scottish Government is fully funding the commitment and, as set out in the Revenue Funding Allocation letter issued to local authorities on 22 February 2018, up to £18 million has been made available to local authorities in 2018-19 to enable them to pay the salaries of the additional graduates. Recurring revenue will be provided as part of the multi-year funding package for the ELC expansion agreed by Scottish Ministers and COSLA leaders.

### **ACTION 33 – MAKE REAL PROGRESS IN CLOSING THE ATTAINMENT GAP DURING THE LIFETIME OF THIS PARLIAMENT AND TO ELIMINATE IT, AS FAR AS WE CAN, OVER THE NEXT DECADE**

The Scottish Attainment Challenge focuses on helping children most affected by the poverty-related attainment gap and helps raise standards for all in our schools. To support this ambition, over the lifetime of this Parliament we will invest £750 million in the Attainment Scotland Fund.

In 2018-19, the fourth year of the Challenge, £179 million of this funding has been committed. Of this, Pupil Equity Funding is providing £120 million directly to schools to be spent at the discretion of head teachers and school leaders in improving attainment, and £50 million to the Attainment Challenge Authorities and Schools Programmes in areas of high deprivation. This funding also supports a number of national programmes, including staffing supply and capacity, professional learning and school leadership.

An evaluation of the first two years of the Fund showed that there was an increased awareness, understanding and shared commitment to address the impact of poverty on attainment across local authorities and schools. Additional funding of £8.2 million in 2018-19 will support a new fund specifically for care-experienced children and young people, to be directed by local authorities. This funding will provide targeted initiatives, activities and support that will help improve educational outcomes and attainment for this group of disadvantaged young people.

## **ACTION 34 – DO MORE TO ADDRESS BULLYING IN SCHOOLS – INCLUDING HOMOPHOBIC, BIPHOBIC AND TRANSPHOBIC (HBT) BULLYING**

In November 2017, the Scottish Government published updated anti-bullying guidance, *Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*.<sup>14</sup> This guidance is for everyone working with children and young people and provides a holistic approach to anti-bullying. The approach forms part of our wider attempts to improve the health and wellbeing of our children and young people.

Following the publication of 'Respect for All', a working group was established to develop a consistent and uniform approach to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying in schools. An Operational Support Group is now supporting local authorities to implement the new process on a phased approach. This will be fully implemented by August 2019.

We continue to fund *respectme* to work with local authorities and other organisations working with children and young people to build confidence and capacity to address bullying effectively. *respectme* is supporting the roll out of the guidance 'Respect for All' to all those who work with children and young people. We have also funded the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) to produce guidance in line with 'Respect for All', for schools to address bullying based on race. This will be published later this year.

The Scottish Government is committed to working with the Time for Inclusive Education campaign to deal with LGBTI bullying, discrimination and prejudice in schools through the LGBTI Inclusive Education Working Group. The Working Group has considered initial teacher training as part of their Strategic Work Plan to give teachers confidence, knowledge and skills to deliver inclusive LGBTI education and support LGBTI learners. Recommendations from the Working Group were accepted by Scottish Ministers in November 2018 and work has commenced to begin the implementation. In November 2017, LGBT Youth Scotland published *Addressing Inclusion: Effectively Challenging Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia*<sup>15</sup> and delivered practice seminars which complements *Respect for All*. Additional funding has been provided to LGBT Youth Scotland to deliver more training to teachers in 2018-19.

The Scottish Government will update the *Conduct of Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood Education in Schools*<sup>16</sup> in 2019.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/11/6766>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.lgbtyouth.org.uk/media/1299/addressing-inclusion.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/conduct-relationships-sexual-health-parenthood-education-schools/>

## **ACTION 35 – TACKLE POVERTY DIRECTLY FOR SOME OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN BY DELIVERING PARITY OF CHILD ALLOWANCES BETWEEN KINSHIP AND FOSTER CARERS**

The Scottish Government provided additional funding of £10.1 million a year to enable local authorities to pay kinship care allowance at the same rate as paid to foster carers within their area.

The National Review of Care Allowances (Foster, Kinship and Adoption) began in autumn 2017. The Review Group supporting this work first met on 20 November 2017 and then regularly throughout 2018. The aim of the Review Group was to consider the current landscape of foster, kinship and adoption allowances, including the practical and financial support available to families and those who support them, and to recommend ways in which it could be improved. The Review Group's report and recommendations,<sup>17</sup> published on 14 September 2018, suggests changes to give carers of children in foster, kinship and adoption care smoother access to information and more consistent financial support. We are working in partnership with COSLA and other stakeholders on a response to this report.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/09/7393>

## 3. A STRONG START FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

### SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

#### **ACTION 36 – TAKE ACTION TO REDUCE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT BY 40% BY 2021**

The Developing Young Workforce programme has achieved the target to reduce youth unemployment, excluding those in full-time education, by 40% by 2021.

For this ambitious target to be met, the youth unemployment level for those not in full-time education needs to be 31,000 or below. Figures from May 2018 show we have achieved the target for this review period, with youth unemployment recorded at 28,000. In achieving this target, we are mindful of the significant role played by wider economic and social factors. It is important that we continue our long term plans to strengthen education and skills partnerships to ensure we can better guarantee the equality of experience across Scotland and minimise any downturn in youth employment should economic conditions become less favourable.

We have set out how we will tackle gender imbalances and promote equality of access in relation to subject and career choices, for example, through the Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan and Scottish Funding Council Gender Action Plan for colleges and universities. We are aware, however, that more needs to be done to close the wide gap that persists in youth employment rates between disabled people and non-disabled people. In the year ahead, there will be continued focus on implementing the Modern Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan to help increase the participation of young people from under-represented groups, such as care leavers, disabled people and minority ethnic communities.

#### **ACTION 37 – SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE NUMBERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE GETTING INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE WHILE STILL AT SCHOOL TO HELP THEM KICK-START A SUCCESSFUL CAREER IN THEIR CHOSEN FIELD**

Developing the Young Workforce aims to create work relevant education offers to young people in Scotland, providing them with the skills needed for the current and anticipated jobs market. As outlined in Action 36, we have achieved the target to reduce youth unemployment by 40% four years ahead of schedule. We are continuing to increase vocational provision for young people in the senior phase, including a significant expansion of the Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme. Our aim is to offer 30,000 MA opportunities by 2021, and with 27,145 MA starts in 2017-18, we are on track to achieve this target. In addition, as of 2017, there were 1,245 young people enrolled in Foundation Apprenticeships.

#### **ACTION 38 – WIDEN ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY**

Every child, no matter their background, should have an equal chance of going to university and accessing the learning that will provide them with the skills and qualifications to succeed in life. We remain firmly committed to widening access to

university for people from our most deprived communities, with UCAS clearing analysis (published September 2018) showing that we are making good progress. We will continue to work closely with the sector to ensure we meet our target that students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent 20% of entrants to higher education by 2030.

We want Scotland's student support system to be focused on the poorest students to enable them to study at college or university. Following the Independent Review of Student Support, and in order to support our ambition to reduce child poverty and widen access to university, the Scottish Government committed additional funding of £21 million per year by the end of this Parliamentary term for improvements to student support. As part of that, we have increased the higher education care-experienced bursary to £8,100 and extended this to students studying in further education from 2018-19.

The Commissioner for Fair Access published his first annual report in December 2017. He has also published a series of discussion papers providing new evidence and challenge on key access issues, including admissions and student retention and outcomes.

## **FINANCIAL HELP AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT**

### **ACTION 39 – INTRODUCE A JOB GRANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16-24 WHO HAVE BEEN OUT OF WORK FOR SIX MONTHS OR MORE**

The Scottish Government has been engaging with the UK Government to explore options that would allow the Job Grant to be provided to young people aged 16-24 who have been out of paid employment for six months or more. The UK Government has agreed in principle to a Section 63 Order to enable the delivery of the Job Grant in Scotland.

When introduced, the grant will be a one off payment of either £100, or £250 for individuals with children, and a travel element to help with travel costs for the first three months of employment. The Job Grant aims to help meet the initial costs of starting work and support a smooth transition into employment for young people on low incomes.

We intend to consult widely with stakeholders, including young people, on the detail of the eligibility criteria before it is finalised. This will help our wider aspiration to support young people achieve their potential and help them transition into employment.

## **ACTION 40 – ENSURE THAT SUPPORT FOR HOUSING COSTS IS NOT TAKEN AWAY FROM YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 18-21**

The UK Government removed automatic entitlement to the housing element of Universal Credit from 18-21 year olds as part of cuts of £12 billion to social security over the period of this UK Parliament. On 29 March 2018, the DWP announced that it had reversed this decision and more recently announced that they had laid amended regulations on 5 November, coming into force on 31 December 2018, revoking the removal of assistance with housing costs for those aged 18-21. From April 2017, the Scottish Government has had a scheme in place to support those affected. This action was a specific response to the DWP decision and will remain in place until the DWP policy change is implemented. The scheme allows those affected to receive support from local authorities, either through access to an exemption from the DWP or to receive financial assistance through the Scottish Welfare Fund if this is not possible. Local authority costs are met by the Scottish Government.

## **ACTION 41 – HELP YOUNG SCOT TO MAKE THE NATIONAL ENTITLEMENT CARD SMART-READY FOR 11-25 YEAR OLDS**

Transport Scotland continue to work with Young Scot to realise ambitions around providing smart travel entitlements for young people via the Young Scot National Entitlement Card (NEC). This includes Young Scot representation on the Modern Apprentice Programme Board which has influenced the 2018 Programme for Government commitment to offer free transport to Modern Apprentices in Scotland. Transport Scotland plays an active role in the Young Scot attainment challenge project, including representation on the advisory board and working together on potential technical solutions. Young Scot and Transport Scotland remain key strategic partners in relation to developments around the Young Scot NEC.

## 4. FAIRER WORKING LIVES

### DECENT PAY

#### **ACTION 42 – DO MORE TO PROMOTE THE LIVING WAGE**

We have already done a lot to promote the Living Wage in Scotland. The Scottish Government has long championed the payment of the Living Wage and the real benefits to our economy of treating people who work more fairly. Scotland remains the best performing of all four UK countries, with the highest proportion of employees paid the real Living Wage or more (80.6%).

Having reached the target of having 1000 accredited Living Wage employers, we commit to lifting at least 25,000 more people onto the real Living Wage. Over the next three years the Scottish Government will work with the Poverty Alliance, providing £340,000 of funding in 2018-19 to them, to build a 'Living Wage Nation', boosting the wages of those on low pay and supporting inclusive growth. There will be a focus on the hospitality and tourism sectors, where there are many low paid jobs. These sectors are dominated by women workers, the majority of whom work part-time.

The new Living Wage hourly rate of £9.00 in Scotland was announced by the First Minister on 5 November 2018. This is a voluntary rate set by the Living Wage Foundation. During Living Wage Week Ministers visited 13 employers across Scotland to celebrate the commitment of accredited Living Wage employers, and the positive impacts for their employees.

### FLEXIBLE WORKING

#### **ACTION 43 – DO MORE TO HELP PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND TO WORK FLEXIBLY**

While powers over flexible working are reserved to the UK Government, the Scottish Government recognises that this is a key component in enhancing staff retention and recruitment. To encourage flexible working practices, we continue to fund Family Friendly Working Scotland, a collaborative partnership with Working Families, Parenting Across Scotland and Fathers Network Scotland. Through this partnership, established in 2014, the Scottish Government works with a number of third sector organisations to support and promote the development of family friendly working across Scotland and to promote the 'Happy to Talk Flexible Working' strapline for job adverts to highlight a job can be done on a flexible basis.

Family Friendly Working Scotland continue to offer practical support to employers and to share best practice while raising awareness of the benefits around flexible and family friendly working in Scotland through a range of programmes and campaigns. These include Scottish Top Employers for Working Families Awards, National Work Life Week and planning for Scotland's first employer Flexible Festival in October 2019.

## EMPLOYABILITY AND DISCRIMINATION

### **ACTION 44 – IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

In A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People,<sup>18</sup> we set out our ambition to reduce the disability employment gap by more than half. The most recent Annual Population Survey data shows a reduction in the gap from 37.4% in 2016 to 35.8% in 2017. Although all the employment related commitments in A Fairer Scotland for Disabled people have been implemented or commenced, we recognise we must go further.

On 11 December 2018, Jamie Hepburn, Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills launched A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan, which sets out the cross-Government steps we will take towards our ambition and the timeline for achieving it. In the plan we commit to achieve our ambition to at least halve the disability employment gap over the next 20 years which we believe is both ambitious but realistic.

The actions in the plan fall within three priority areas: working with employers; supporting disabled people into work, and improving transitions from school for young people. The Scottish Government is committed to demonstrating leadership as an employer and will set targets for the employment of disabled people. We will invest in supporting disabled parents towards and into work in areas where child poverty is high and disability employment rates are low. We will also invest in developing support for employers through a new Public Social Partnership, and pilot support similar to Access to Work for disabled people to undertake work experience or work trials.

### **ACTION 45 – LAUNCH A PILOT ‘RETURNERS’ PROJECT HELP BRING EXPERIENCED WOMEN BACK INTO THE WORKPLACE AFTER A CAREER BREAK**

We have delivered on our commitment for a Returner’s Programme to assist women to re-enter the workforce following a career break. This included an award of nearly £50,000 to Equate Scotland to provide 40 women with support to re-enter the STEM labour market, and funding of more than £185,000 to a further six projects to address the under-representation of women in the finance, security and manufacturing sectors. These projects also helped increase business start-up rates for women and the number of women in senior positions and encouraged men into childcare. One project specifically supported black and minority ethnic women back into the workplace. Placements are ongoing and we will evaluate these by summer 2019.

The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills opened the £750,000 Workplace Equality Fund in February 2018. The aim of the Workplace Equality Fund is to reduce employment inequalities so that everyone – irrespective of age, disability, gender or race – has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. A total of nine projects were awarded funding in the first round and another thirteen in the second round. Of these, three projects are specially focused on supporting women to return to work.

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<sup>18</sup> [www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/3778](http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/3778)

In our Programme for Government, we have stated that we will invest £5 million over the next three years to support around 2,000 women to return to work.

#### **ACTION 46 – TACKLE DISCRIMINATION ON PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY LEAVE IN THE WORKPLACE**

The Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Working Group has been actively promoting advice and guidance and sharing examples of good practice on these issues to employers around Scotland and via the Business Pledge website. In order to strengthen employer advice to ensure that work environments are safe and healthy for pregnant women and new mothers, the Scottish Government is helping to ensure websites such as Ready Steady Baby, NHS Inform and The Parent Club include links to relevant pregnancy and maternity guidance.

The Scottish Government has developed a communications strategy around the benefits of employers having positive pregnancy and maternity policies. This details forthcoming events where positive pregnancy and maternity messages, tailored to appropriate sectors and audiences, are being included within Ministerial speeches, stakeholder events or related media channels.

In recognition of the pregnancy and maternity related issues faced by employees and employers in certain sectors, the Working Group has helped to shape and draft the criteria of the Workplace Equality Fund, aimed at supporting businesses to identify and promote practice to reduce employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers. The Scottish Government also funded the Growing Up in Scotland Maternal Employment research, published on 1 November 2017.<sup>19</sup> This explored changes to mothers' employment status and trajectories over the first five years of their child's life, examining the characteristics of mothers unable to find paid work and the main barriers they face.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/11/6970/0>

## 5. A THRIVING THIRD AGE

### **ACTION 47 – HELP THOSE OLDER PEOPLE WHO WANT TO KEEP WORKING AFTER THEY HAVE REACHED STATE PENSION AGE**

The Scottish Government has taken a number of steps to support older people in and into work. We published independent research from Edinburgh University in August 2017 to investigate the attitudes of older people towards extended employment and whether there were barriers they felt they had to overcome. This research aimed to improve our evidence base for taking action to encourage older people to work longer but to also help them achieve a good balance between their employment and other important aspects of their lives.

We will continue to make the case for devolution of employment law to the Scottish Parliament. Alongside this, we are taking action to help older people who want to keep working, including working with partners such as Age Scotland, Business in the Community and Edinburgh University to promote good practice in recruiting older workers and ensuring they are treated fairly in the workplace. We are also supporting businesses to address long standing barriers in accessing the labour market through the Workplace Equality Fund. Six projects who were successful in securing funding will be targeting support to older workers.

Individual Training Accounts provide people of all ages access of up to £200 per year for training and skills development; the aim of which is to enhance the employment prospects of those in low paid work or looking for work, and to equip people with the right skills to be successful within our labour market. We continue to promote the uptake of the Living Wage which will benefit older workers financially, and we are funding the Carer Positive Awards scheme to help workers with caring responsibilities to remain in employment, and Family Friendly Working Scotland to encourage flexible workplace practices.

Fair Start Scotland is a distinctly Scottish employment support service focusing on those further from the labour market for whom work is a realistic prospect. The service, which began in April 2018, will assist those who are disadvantaged in the labour market, providing person tailored support and a fair opportunity to secure employment.

### **ACTION 48 – HELP OLDER PEOPLE CLAIM THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT THEY ARE ENTITLED TO**

To help reduce poverty levels among older people, we undertook a pilot exercise to test the use of a Financial Health Check targeted at older people. The pilot followed directly after the “You’ve Earned It, Why Not Claim It?” social marketing campaign to encourage increased uptake of benefits, which Social Security colleagues ran in October 2017, aimed specifically at older people. Citizens Advice Scotland along with 14 Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) across Scotland undertook a range of activities to attract and then deliver the Financial Health Check over a four week period commencing 6 November 2017. The pilot revealed that CABx supported over 450 clients with over 750 issues; the project reached not only its target group, but

also other disadvantaged groups (82% of clients were aged 60 or over, with 50% reporting disabilities, and 21% with caring responsibilities); and a total of at least £49,000 of direct client financial gain was secured over the period of the pilot.

The pilot exercise was the first element of a wider programme. Building on the findings, the Financial Health Check was launched on 2 November 2018 providing older people and low-income families with help to maximise their incomes by claiming the benefits and other support they are entitled to. The Financial Health Check will also help to reduce their outgoings where they are paying higher prices for essential goods and services like gas, electricity and banking.

### **ACTION 49 – PROTECT OLDER PEOPLE ON LOWER INCOMES WITH COUNCIL TAX REFORMS**

Our reform of council tax bands in April 2017 did not affect the three quarters of Scottish households that live in bands A to D, and our extension of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme will protect those on middle incomes (up to £25,000 a year) living in properties in bands E to H from the recent changes to council tax bands. This support will provide many pensioner households living in band E to H properties with additional support so that they do not pay more.

We will take further steps to promote awareness of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme that already helps around half a million low income households to meet their Council Tax liabilities, and encourage those who may be entitled to a reduction to apply.

### **ACTION 50 – IMPROVE THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF FUNERAL PAYMENTS SO IT HELPS MORE PEOPLE, IS MORE PREDICTABLE AND PROVIDES HELP MORE QUICKLY**

We are making good progress to launch our new benefit, Funeral Expense Assistance, which will replace the current Funeral Payment in Scotland by summer 2019. We are working to ensure that we develop a system based on dignity, fairness and respect. In response to what we have heard from individuals and organisations about how the current payment could be improved, the Scottish Government has announced that we will:

- Process completed applications within 10 working days and make payment as soon as practicable thereafter,
- Introduce a new process to decide who is responsible for the funeral. This will help people understand if they are eligible, reduce intrusive questions, and assist in our work to increase take-up so that people receive the support they are entitled to.
- Uprate the flat rate part of the payment (currently set at £700) annually so that it does not lose value due to inflation.

These changes will significantly improve the experience of bereaved families across Scotland who are struggling with funeral costs. The changes will widen eligibility for support by 40% and are backed by around £2 million of Scottish Government

funding annually in addition to the funding expected to transfer from the UK Government.

Our public consultation on draft Funeral Expense Assistance regulations closed on 23 August 2018. The Scottish Government has been considering responses to the consultation in order to take further decisions on how the benefit will operate before laying regulations early in 2019. Alongside this, we are continuing to work with individuals and organisations with experience of the current payment to develop an application process to deliver the benefit.

In addition, we are taking other actions to help tackle funeral poverty, as set out in our Funeral Costs Plan. This includes working with the funeral industry to develop guidance on funeral costs to improve the availability of information to help people understand and compare funeral options. We will also continue work to encourage people to talk about their funeral wishes and plan for their funeral.

# RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

In addition to 50 core actions, the Fairer Scotland Action Plan also included commitments on new research and strategic approaches. This chapter reflects on progress made against these.

## RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

We committed to produce an Equality Evidence Strategy for Scotland and this was published in July 2017. High quality equality evidence and analysis is vital to underpin effective and inclusive policy making in Scotland and the movement of our main data site – the Equality Evidence Finder – to be hosted alongside the National Performance Framework (NPF) reinforces this link. Wherever possible, NPF indicators will provide breakdowns by protected characteristic, increasing our understanding of the impact of policies on equality groups. The Evidence Finder will contain further detailed information across policy areas as well as promoting qualitative data.

However, despite improvements in recent years, there remain gaps in Scotland's equality evidence base. We are continuing to work with stakeholders to prioritise and fill these.

In September 2017, we published a discussion paper to test a methodology to develop a Gender Index for Scotland. The paper concluded that it was not possible or sensible to replicate the European methodology. Instead, a working group was established with key gender stakeholders to help compile a Scottish-specific Gender Index, domain by domain, over a two year period. Interim domain results will be published when these have been compiled.

The passing of the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act in 2017 and the development of the first delivery plan, Every Child, Every Chance, was based on and accompanied by significant research and analysis into the targets, drivers and projections for child poverty up to 2030; and identification of priority families for assistance in order to reduce child poverty. This analysis<sup>20</sup> was published alongside the delivery plan. We also published new experimental statistics on children in families with limited resources.<sup>21</sup> This publication, based on new data from the Scottish Household Survey, provided a local picture of the proportion of children living without essential goods and services.

In August 2017, we published new research on older people and employment, informed by discussions with employers and older people about the barriers and enablers to keeping older people in the workplace. A research report and a policy booklet summarising the key findings and recommendations were published and an event held with a range of employers from the private and the public sector on the same day. The Scottish Government is taking forward a number of the recommendations contained within the report. This has included:

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/03/4093>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/11/9758>

- funding a Returner's programme to assist women, through a number of different opportunities including training programmes, to re-enter the workforce following a career break;
- working with partners such as Age Scotland, Business in the Community and Edinburgh University to promote good practice in recruiting older workers and ensuring they are treated fairly in the workplace;
- providing £750,000 to the Workplace Equality Fund to address long standing barriers in accessing the labour market. Through the Fund's first round, several projects were granted funding to support older workers. The second round of applications to the Fund closed on 30 August 2018 and are currently being assessed;
- promoting the uptake of the Living Wage which will benefit older workers financially;
- providing £159,000 in 2018-19 to the Family Friendly Working Scotland Partnership to support and promote development of flexible and agile workplaces;
- funding the Carer Positive Awards scheme to help workers with caring responsibilities to remain in employment;
- establishing a Gender Pay Gap Working Group to identify action to reduce gender pay gaps across Scotland as part of the Scottish Government's inclusive growth vision; and
- establishing Fair Start Scotland, the devolved employment support service, which is a distinctly Scottish employment support service focusing on those further from the labour market for whom work is a realistic prospect. The service will assist those who are disadvantaged in the labour market, providing person tailored support and a fair opportunity to secure employment.

An evidence review of the life chances of young people in Scotland, prepared for the First Minister's Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality, was published in July 2017. This was a companion piece to the Independent Advisor's report to the First Minister on the life chances of young people in Scotland, which was published on the same day. We committed to start implementing the 18 recommendations made in The Life Chances of Young People in Scotland report throughout the Year of Young People 2018,<sup>22</sup> and to publish an update in the Fairer Scotland Action Plan progress report in 2019 setting out the progress made to date.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00522051.pdf>

## FAIRNESS PLEDGES

It takes all of us to build a Fairer Scotland – that’s why the Fairer Scotland Action Plan included Fairness Pledges from a range of organisations across society. This chapter provides an update from pledgers on the progress they’ve made over the past 12 months.

### **THE CARNEGIE UK TRUST pledged to work to improve access to affordable credit.**

“This year has seen a significant increase in support and understanding of affordable credit as part of an anti-poverty solution. This has brought real results for citizens, with more providers lending to more people in need in Scotland. Scotland is being recognised by partners from around the UK as being in the vanguard of tackling the problems of access to affordable credit and financial exclusion, with the Trust working closely with actor Michael Sheen to help his End High Cost Credit Alliance replicate approaches which are seeing results in Scotland.

We launched the £1 million Affordable Credit Loan Fund to be made available to not-for-profit credit providers to lend to more of the poorest communities in Scotland. The Scottish Government has matched this £1 million, doubling the size of the fund, through a commitment in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. The Fund is being managed by Social Investment Scotland.

We launched Speaking out for Fair Credit, a short film highlighting the positive impact not-for-profit lenders can have on borrowers’ lives, featuring narration by Michael Sheen and testimony from customers who have been helped by some of the UK’s affordable lenders.

Conduit Scotland, the new affordable credit lender serving Fife, West Lothian and Falkirk council areas, supported by a unique consortium of these local authorities, has had a successful first year of trading. Nearly 1,000 loans have been issued to local people, who report a 99% satisfaction with the service.

Following last year’s successful expansion into Edinburgh, Scotcash has continued to grow their reach through a series of successful TV marketing campaigns and the development of an online lending offer to the whole of the UK, winning them the Responsible Lender and Alternative Lender of the Year accolades at the UK Credit awards.

We have published three major pieces of research to continue to build understanding of affordable credit challenges. *Repay Right*<sup>23</sup> is an exploration of young people’s experience of and attitude towards credit and debt by Young Scot. *Payday Denied*,<sup>24</sup> undertaken by Coventry University and Toynbee Hall on behalf of the Trust, examines where customers who are declined high cost credit go to meet their

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/repay-right/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/payday-denied-exploring-the-lived-experience-of-declined-payday-loan->

borrowing needs; while *Use of Credit and Financial Resilience*<sup>25</sup> is a deep dive analysis by Ipsos MORI of the saving and borrowing habits of people in Scotland. In addition, we commissioned an ambitious review of the UK personal lending CDFI sector to identify the actions required to deliver a step change to £200 million of operationally sustainable lending by the sector by 2027.

We supported a new Credit Union Consortium to help more of Scotland's workforces benefit from credit union membership via their employer. We are doing this by supporting the appointment of a new Employer Engagement Officer shared by East Kilbride Credit Union, Castle Community Bank, Kingdom Community Bank, 1st Alliance (Ayrshire) Credit Union and West Lothian Credit Union.

The Trust-convened Affordable Credit Action Group, led by the Very Reverend John Chalmers, has continued to provide strategic and advisory support towards the expansion of affordable credit in Scotland. Following this lead, stakeholders in Wales have now established a similar group to advance Welsh activities in this area."

**CORRA FOUNDATION (previously known as Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland) pledged to help the Scottish Government support innovative approaches to tackling poverty and deprivation. As well as continuing to be a thoughtful grant-maker, they would work differently to reach the communities that historically have accessed very little charitable funding.**

"The past 12 months have been a period of significant development for Corra Foundation, the People in Place programme, and communities we are working alongside. Corra Foundation has continued our commitment to getting alongside communities and developed new, interconnected People in Place programme elements that contribute to a Fairer Scotland.

**Getting Alongside Communities:** Community Co-ordinators are now established in nine communities identified through an innovative approach to working where traditional grant funding has not historically reached: Cumnock in East Ayrshire; Fernhill in South Lanarkshire; Carbrain in North Lanarkshire; Castlehill in West Dunbartonshire; Blacklands in North Ayrshire; Dunterlie in East Renfrewshire; Bainsford and Langlees in Falkirk; Buckhaven and Methil in Fife.

Key aspects of our work alongside communities include:

- Supporting communities to access the agenda free spaces required to develop new ideas and activities.
- Providing a key brokerage role within communities (between local people and groups) and between communities and wider stakeholders.
- Building trust and relationships required to support communities to have a voice in local decision making.
- Empowering local people and communities to identify and translate ideas into action, for example, community actions plans, environmental improvement,

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/use-of-credit-and-financial-resilience-analysis-of-the-scottish-household-survey/>

parent and toddler groups, community events, growing and sharing food, creative and social history groups.

**Appetite for Change:** After developing our Getting Alongside Communities team, we began to be approached by places, outwith our initial communities, who wanted to collaborate with us to develop innovative place-based approaches. In response to this demand we created the Appetite for Change programme and are currently developing partnerships, and new investment, to take this work forward.

**Place-based Working Project:** Funded by Scottish Government, this project aims to improve place-based working in Scotland. It brings together organisations from across the third, private and public sectors, supports collaboration and is currently working towards development of a knowledge hub and a place leadership summit in autumn 2018.”

### **DUNDEE PARTNERSHIP – Dundee City Council have pledged to take forward all recommendations of the Dundee Fairness Commission.**

The Cost of the School Day project has completed its first year of work in 11 primary schools, two secondary schools and two early years’ centres. Its key recommendations for schools and the council address many aspects of school, including breakfast clubs, school lunches, uniform, school trips and homework. The full report was presented to the Council’s Children and Families Committee in June 2018. Already, the Council has adopted four Cost of the School Day pledges<sup>26</sup>. Phase two of the project is underway and will focus predominantly on supporting schools to adopt and implement action plans to remove school costs and address other financial barriers that stop children and families fully participating in the opportunities that school life offers.

Dundee Fighting for Fairness (the second Dundee Fairness Commission) was established in June 2017 bringing together 24 Commissioners on a regular basis - 12 with personal experience of poverty and 12 with influence across various sectors in the city. After hearing Commissioners’ personal stories, the Commission identified three key areas of focus: Mental Health through the Lens of Poverty; People and Money; and Stigma. Working Groups were formed to allow the Commission to take conversations out to others before identifying challenges and exploring practical solutions. The Commission had an early success by influencing the preparations for the recruitment of front-line staff to be employed by the new Social Security Scotland agency to be headquartered in Dundee. The commission launched its Dundee Fighting for Fairness report<sup>27</sup> and recommendations on 29 November 2018 and Community Commissioners have presented these to the Dundee Partnership and the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government in December 2018.

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/cost-school-day-dundee>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.dundee.gov.uk/dundee-partnership/publications/dfff-recommendations-pdf-118mb>

**INCLUSION SCOTLAND** pledged to seize every opportunity to ensure that disabled people are full included in the delivery and future development of all aspects of the Fairer Scotland Action Plan.

“Inclusion Scotland has continued to help ensure that the voices of disabled people inform the development of the new Scottish social security system. We collected disabled people’s views to inform the evidence we provided during the Social Security Act’s passage through Parliament. We also worked with officials and MSPs to improve the legislation. Changes we helped secure include a right to advocacy support for disabled people claiming social security assistance, a right to be paid in cash, the adoption of inclusive communication standards and the ending of unnecessary face-to-face medical assessments.

We have also continued to be involved in the Disability and Carers Benefits Expert Advisory Group – our CEO is Deputy Chair – and several other social security stakeholder groups. Other key areas of activity have included securing changes to the Child Poverty Bill and we have worked in partnership with the EHRC on their inquiry into accessible housing and publicised the issue via national press and media work.

On employment, we ran a social media campaign (#myworkstory) to gather disabled people’s experiences of recruitment and employment. Employment was the theme of our Annual Summit, Situations Vacant<sup>28</sup>. This shifted the focus away from employability, which focuses on disabled people’s perceived inadequacies to employer’s ‘employer-ability’ – to recruit and retain us. The Summit report contains 27 solutions from disabled people to improve our chances of employment. These informed a major Scottish Government Congress on disabled people’s employment. We have also continued our programme of internships for disabled people, focusing primarily on placements within the Scottish Parliament, third and public sectors. We are currently piloting an expansion of this programme into the private sector.

Building on the success of our Parliamentary Internships and the Access to Elected Office Fund, which we administer on behalf of The Scottish Government, we worked with the main Scottish political parties to develop an Access to Politics Charter. This is designed to enable more participation by disabled people in political activities leading, in the longer term, to their greater representation as candidates and elected members. The Charter was launched at an event in the Scottish Parliament where all five of the main parties’ Parliamentary leaders signed it and pledged their parties’ support.

We have been working to inform our members of opportunities to participate in local decision-making and budgeting. Our Highlands/Localisation project has also been successful in promoting disabled people’s involvement in community planning. In the coming year, our People-Led Policy project will enable how people who use adult social care support to be actively involved in developments can be directly involved in decision-making around social care policy and implementation.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.ilis.co.uk/uploads/ILIS%20Summit%20report%20DIGITAL%20FINAL.pdf>

We worked with a UK-wide coalition of Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations in participating in the examination of UK and devolved Governments in Geneva on their implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People. The coalition of groups was described by the UN's Rapporteur as the real leaders in disability rights whilst the UK Government were condemned for presiding over a "human catastrophe". We will continue to work with the UK Coalition and Scottish Government to progress the delivery of disabled people's human rights and establish means through which disabled people can monitor progress.

We also brought together disabled people, academics, service providers and decision makers to explore the implications of Brexit for disabled people and to identify solutions. We then produced a Statement of Principles to inform disabled people and decision-makers about what needs to happen to preserve and progress our rights post-Brexit."

**JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION** pledged to set out their strategy to solve poverty in common with the Fairer Scotland Action Plan through a range of actions.

"JRF is in the process of becoming a social change organisation. We will do so by developing our social investment work and supporting the direct participation of people with lived experience of poverty, as well as continuing to publish independent research evidence on the changing face of poverty in Scotland and across the UK.

We have committed £1.75 million to our social investment work in Scotland, as well as GB-wide funding which benefits people experiencing poverty in Scotland. We want to help build practical solutions to poverty – for example, we are part of the Fair by Design coalition which aims to end the poverty premium in key goods and services within a decade. We are co-investors alongside the Scottish Government in Our Power which has helped more than 24,000 social housing tenants to make substantial savings on their energy bills. We are supporting Fair For You which targets the high-cost rent-to-buy market by offering white goods and home essentials at an affordable price, saving customers more than £500 on average per item. This is a GB-wide service proving popular in Scotland, in part due to remote and rural areas having the same access and costs as urban areas.

We are investing to reduce financial exclusion, by partnering with Carnegie UK Trust and Social Investment Scotland to boost access to affordable credit for low-income households.

On fair work, we are investing in Glasgow Together which directly employs people with an offending history in construction jobs, paid at the living wage.

And on affordable housing, we are supporting a pilot fund for Housing First in Edinburgh for people with multiple, complex needs to secure housing and personalised support in the community.

JRF funded the catalyst role in the Building Connections<sup>29</sup> demonstration project in Glasgow. This tested the embedding of advice on social security payments, debt, childcare, apprenticeships, mental health and English language support in two GP surgeries and two Job Centres. Findings published at the start of 2018 showed more than 700 residents being referred to advice agencies (more than 80% of them for the first time), resulting in £1.2 million worth of financial gain through take-up of social security and reduction in debt costs. There are valuable implications for the Scottish Government's commitment to introduce a Financial Health Check for families."

**NHS HEALTH SCOTLAND pledged to help the Scottish Government in its ambition to end child poverty in Scotland.**

"We continue to provide public health leadership and advocacy on the impact of child poverty on health and wellbeing and what action that can be taken to tackle it, for example, through the Children and Young People Public Health Group and by contributing to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, the Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, the Scottish Government's local child poverty action report guidance and Best Start Grant.

We are working in partnership with the Improvement Service and the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit to provide practical evidence, evaluation, analytical and facilitation support to local areas producing child poverty action plans as part of the Act, working with and through local partnerships. Our contribution to date includes a suite of child poverty briefings, a sample outcomes planning tool and case studies on local action.<sup>30</sup>

We continue to progress efforts to embed financial inclusion within universal NHS services. Our work with the Scottish Health Promotion Managers Group to further develop financial inclusion referral pathways between midwifery, health visiting and advice services has resulted in a mapping report of current activity in Scotland with recommendations and the creation of an action plan. The Scottish Government included reference to this work in their Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan and invited us to submit a successful proposal on how the £500,000 allocated fund should be used, namely through NHS Board Public Health. This resource provides a contribution to the approach that will allow local leadership and ownership for the actions that are required to be tailored to local circumstances but focusing on creating capacity, developing the workforce and negotiating additional capacity with local advice service providers. We have also been providing advisory support to the Scottish Government funded Welfare Advice Services Professional to promote the embedding of advice services in general practice. A series of films<sup>31</sup> has been produced to explain these different models.

We are leading the Facing up to Child Poverty in Schools Practice Network with local authority representatives and partners to strengthen local partnership action on efforts to scale up efforts across Scotland to address the cost barriers of school. It

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<sup>29</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/conduct-relationships-sexual-health-parenthood-education-schools/>

<sup>30</sup> [www.healthscotland.scot](http://www.healthscotland.scot)

<sup>31</sup> [www.healthscotland.scot/financial-inclusion-pathways](http://www.healthscotland.scot/financial-inclusion-pathways)

provides a forum for peer support, learning and improvement around adoption of poverty-proofing approaches and practice, and engages with other national partner organisations to progress required action at a national level. A series of films<sup>32</sup> to promote this activity have been produced.

We have been working with the Poverty Alliance to establish a structure for a new poverty learning hub. This will host pre-existing learning materials on poverty with an emphasis on stigma and discrimination. We are working with relevant staff from across public services to help refine the content and co-produce supplementary learning materials. We aim to launch the poverty learning hub on our Virtual Learning Environment<sup>33</sup> at the end of March 2019.”

**THE POVERTY TRUTH COMMISSION (PTC) pledged to ensure that people experiencing poverty are at the heart of work to overcome it.**

“The PTC has continued to work to ensure that people experiencing poverty are at the heart of work to overcome it. The fourth round of the Commission (bringing together people experiencing poverty with others who can influence policy and attitudes for an 18 month period) came to a close in June 2018, and concentrated on mental health, asylum and benefits cuts and assessments. Further details of the work and recommendations can be found in our final report.<sup>34</sup>

Building on the work and experiences of the previous four Commissions, in autumn 2018 we will be planning where our future work will focus and, looking at what we have learned over the last 10 years and where we would like to go in the future, ensuring that we are a movement for change led by people with experience of poverty.

We continue to talk with and support the new PTC style conversations and look forward to learning from each other in the coming year.”

**THE PRINCE’S TRUST SCOTLAND pledged to expand Mosaic, their new mentoring programme for BME young people who are growing up in the most deprived communities.**

“The Prince’s Trust Scotland has pledged to support 150,000 vulnerable young people by 2030 to overcome significant barriers and have increased access to education, training and employment opportunities.

Our Mosaic mentoring programme creates opportunities for young people from black and ethnic minorities who are growing up in our most deprived communities. In 2017, we worked across four high schools, and supported 277 young people to boost their confidence, self-efficacy and long-term employability. Next year we aim to support 300 young people in four to six schools.

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.healthscotland.scot/cost-of-school>

<sup>33</sup> <https://elearning.healthscotland.com/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/poverty-truth-commission-2017-18-report/>

Our education programme, Achieve, supports those disengaged with school to equip them with the confidence, skills and a qualification to re-engage in education, training or employment. Last year we worked in partnership with 1,730 young people, and we aim to expand this to just over 2,000 in Scotland this year.”

**TIMEWISE AND FAMILY FRIENDLY WORKING SCOTLAND (WORKING FAMILIES) pledged to produce the first ever Flexible Jobs Index for Scotland and to encourage employers to adapt to flexible recruitment**

“Following publication of the first Flexible Jobs Index for Scotland, Timewise has committed to work with the Scottish Government again to publish an updated index in 2020. This will analyse whether progress has been made to increase the ratio of quality jobs advertised as open to flexible or part time working at the point of hire which, in 2017, was only 12%. The new index will highlight whether employers are beginning to apply flexible working to the hiring process to capitalise on the talent and skills of many candidates who can only consider jobs that offer flexibility. To date, 52 Scottish employers are actively using the Happy to Talk Flexible Working logo and guidelines. FFWS intends to grow this number to 75 employers in financial year 2019-2020.

Timewise also ran a series of workshops for two Scottish Government directorates to enhance their approach to flexible working as a key public sector employer.”

**VIRGIN MONEY pledged to do its best to make banking fairer and more accessible for the people of Scotland by building a bank that aims to treat its customers fairly through helping with financial inclusion and tackling diversity.**

“Virgin Money has continued to support Scotcash, the ethical lender, to grow its operation in Edinburgh as well as Glasgow. Since our partnership with Scotcash was launched two years ago, we have helped around 250 Scotcash customers without access to their own bank accounts to open basic bank accounts.

We have continued to lead on the UK Government’s Women in Finance initiative and 273 firms (almost double the 2017 number) have now signed up to the Women in Finance Charter to promote gender equality in financial services firms in Scotland and across the UK.

In addition, on the important subject of fairer access to further and higher education for all students regardless of background, former Virgin Money CEO Jayne-Anne Gadhia chaired the Independent Review into Student Support in Scotland. The review’s report, A New Social Contract for Students,<sup>35</sup> was published in November 2017 and was well received.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://beta.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/report/2017/11/independent-review-student-financial-support-scotland/documents/00527875-pdf/00527875-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/?inline=true/>

In the field of Education, Virgin Money is a committed member of Business in the Community Scotland and has led on various projects, including the Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland pilot in Dalmarnock, Glasgow (working with the University of Glasgow, Glasgow City Council and other stakeholders). Virgin Money volunteers are also helping to extend the excellent MCR Pathways mentoring scheme from Glasgow secondary schools to those in Edinburgh.

Finally, Virgin Money is providing significant expertise and resource to the the Cultural Cities Enquiry which launched across the UK earlier this year and has convened in Glasgow. Part of remit of the project is to encourage the regeneration of deprived areas of our cities through new culture projects, so encouraging fairer access to culture in our society."

**WORKING FAMILIES** pledged to help the Scottish Government build a fairer Scotland by sharing their experience of working with and supporting SMEs to introduce flexible working.

"We have concluded our work with employers on our project in Wales, and are finalising our toolkit for SME employers and will launch this in Jan 2019. Employers have asked for easy to access, digestible and targeted practical resources, and we will align our materials with their requirements to maximise uptake."

**YOUNG SCOT** pledged to use the Young Scot National Entitlement Card and its built in smart-technology to connect young people to services and opportunities.

"We continue to use and develop the capabilities of the Young Scot National Entitlement Card (NEC) and smart-tech to tackle inequalities; working with partners in the Scottish Government, Improvement Service, Transport Scotland and NECPO to further develop the Young Scot NEC smartcard technology to deliver new opportunities to young people.

We are working to deliver smart, widespread capabilities and applications to enable enhanced entitlements, smart transport, opportunities and services – all without stigma for the young person. This includes new local and national entitlement packages connected to our work on the poverty related attainment gap and support for young carers.

The ongoing collaboration with the Improvement Service has made significant progress and is now moving at pace. The programme of work aims to utilise digital and mobile technology to deliver information and services to the 700,000 Young Scot NEC holders, focusing on the best application and delivery methods for those young people who face additional challenges.

Using the smart infrastructure behind the Young Scot NEC, the partnership aligns to the Scottish Government's aims of tackling inequalities and of reducing poverty across Scotland, Scotland's Digital Future Strategy and Transport Scotland's Smart and Integrated Ticketing Strategy.

Our strategic partnership with Scottish Government supports the development of enhanced entitlements to tackle the attainment gap in Scotland and for young carers.

We are currently working with Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire and Highland local authorities to deliver entitlements covering food provision, transport and leisure through the Young Scot NEC. These entitlements, as well as Young Scot's information, discounts and rewards, are helping to remove potential barriers to learning for young people who have faced disadvantage or poverty.

We are establishing a Young Carers Vision Panel, which will support development of a package of non-cash entitlements for young carers, delivered using the Young Scot NEC and our digital services. This project is currently in the co-design phase and delivery of the entitlements will start in 2019."

**YOUTHLINK SCOTLAND** pledged to support the Scottish Government's aims of ensuring "A Fairer Scotland for All" and "A Strong Start for All Young People" by supporting the significant contribution that youth work makes to equality and the realisation of young people's human rights.

"In partnership with Education Scotland, we have trained 40 people who will go on to train other practitioners (who work with young people) in the development of human rights based policy and practice. We have also delivered an Introduction to Children's Rights session to 16 practitioners in Orkney and 21 people in North Ayrshire. We have jointly delivered a Children's Rights session with the Scottish Youth Parliament to YOYP 2018 young ambassadors.

We offer Under Pressure training in partnership with Zero Tolerance Scotland, through which we have trained 26 people who will go on to train other practitioners to work with young people to prevent teen abuse, exploitation and promote healthy relationships. We have supported the establishment and expanded the membership of the Scottish Equalities in Youth Work Steering Group from eight to 23 members. The group also act as an expert panel for the ALL IN inclusive youth work training project.

ALL IN training on inclusive youth work is scheduled to be delivered to its first international cohort in August 2018 and in autumn 2018, the training will be cascaded to youth work practitioners in Scotland. In February 2019, YouthLink Scotland will host an event showcasing the training which will include best practice examples of inclusive youth work.

On 14 May 2018, we launched the Action on Prejudice website, a one-stop shop for young people and youth work practitioners to find information, support and resources to tackle prejudice in their communities. The website was created with input from 18 young people through consultation groups. In the first two months since its launch, the website was accessed by 577 users. We are now working towards the development of a hate crime prevention toolkit which will be co-designed by young people as a peer education tool.

We have partnered with Sense Over Sectarianism to deliver CPD training to teachers and CLD workers on anti-sectarianism resources quality assured by Education Scotland. The training has been offered to schools, youth work organisations and local authorities across Scotland.

With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and in partnership with the National Library of Scotland, over the last year through the Youngwummin project we have trained and supported 10 early career youth workers and 44 young people from five youth groups across Scotland to use youth-led research to examine the impact of WW1 on young women in Scotland. This has culminated in a three month exhibition of the young people's findings at the National Library of Scotland between June and September 2018.”



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