

Progress Report

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled

People

March 2021

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Ministerial Foreword

In 2016 Scottish Government launched *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People*, an action plan that we wrote with the direct involvement of disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs). The plan was developed and written because we wanted, and continue to want, to secure real transformational change for disabled people across Scotland.

For too many disabled people their ambitions, their dreams and achieving their promise is still denied to them because of the barriers society has put in their way. The barriers that disabled people face are not barriers caused by disabled people or by the impairment; they are barriers caused by prejudice, ignorance and thoughtlessness by others. Real change is needed so that all disabled people are valued as equal citizens and can live their lives as independently as they want. We must all continue to work together, as we have done over the past five years, to deliver it.

We cannot think back over the past five years without addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. It has impacted dramatically on many people's lives and shone a light on pre-existing inequality. Disabled people, minority ethnic communities, people on low incomes, older people, young people, and women are amongst those who have experienced disproportionate impacts, with multiple disadvantage making things even harder for many. Disabled people who are at increased clinical risk from the COVID-19 virus have had their lives significantly impacted. In addition, a much wider group of disabled people have had their daily

lives changed through lack of, or altered, services, restrictions, and through the economic impacts.

We have directly supported DPOs and organisations supporting disabled people to deliver their COVID-19 response work. We thank the many organisations that have been doing brilliant work using the funding they have received to support their communities directly or through providing information or undertaking research.

We know that in order for Scotland to be a fairer place for everyone there is a lot of work that needs to happen as we emerge from this pandemic to not only return us to the pre-pandemic state, but then to continue to progress toward true equality. We have shown ambition in ensuring that the setbacks of the pandemic can be speedily reversed through our work with the Social Renewal Advisory Board.

Finally, in our 2020-21 Programme for Government, we committed to actively consider the incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), working with key stakeholders in these sectors. We are proud that the government-led National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership has recently recommended incorporation of UNCRPD as part of a new and comprehensive statutory human rights framework to be taken forward in the next Parliamentary term.

Our shared goal is nothing less than equality for all disabled people. Equal rights for disabled people are about human rights. None of us can enjoy our human rights when even one of us doesn't.

Shirley-Anne Somerville
Cabinet Secretary for Older People and Social Security

Christina McKelvie
Minister for Older People and Equalities

Introduction

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People (hereafter known as the Action Plan) set out the Scottish Government's approach to policy for disabled people. It is based unequivocally on the social model of disability as opposed to the medical model. The medical model focuses on the impairment, rather than on society's inability to meet the needs, rights, and aspirations of disabled people. The social model is rooted firmly in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People (UNCRPD) and is also aligned to the aims of the independent living movement; which is that disabled people can live the life they choose, participating equally alongside other citizens in their families, communities, workplaces and wider society, with the support they need.

The Action Plan was published in 2016 as part of the Scottish Government's programme for a fairer Scotland. It was informed by evidence and consultation with the direct involvement of disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) on a draft disability action plan and by the Fairer Scotland conversations that took place with people across Scotland.

The Action Plan set the overall direction of travel for the Scottish Government over the lifetime of this Parliament (2016 - 2021) to secure real transformational change for disabled people across Scotland. It was built around five longer-term ambitions and a set of 93 actions. These actions are steps toward equality in order for longer strides to be made in the future, knowing it would take much more than one session of Parliament (five years) to bring true equality for disabled people.

Actions and Results across The Five Ambitions in the Action Plan

The Action Plan contained five longer-term ambitions and 93 practical actions, all of which were steps toward greater equality for disabled people over the parliamentary term 2016-21.

Over this period, progress has been tracked against the actions. Not all the actions were equivalent in scale but the delivery of each action had a role to play in progressing toward the long term ambitions. In this part we set out key achievements that support the five ambitions. In the Annex of this document we have set out all 93 actions in the original Action Plan and provided an update on what has been delivered over the past five years.

Ambition 1: Support services that promote independent living, meet needs and work together to enable a life of choices, opportunities and participation

We know that receiving the right social care for each individual is important and necessary for disabled people. Of the total number of people receiving social care support, there has been an increase in the number involved in choosing and controlling their support through Self-directed Support options. The statistics for 2018/19 estimate that nearly four out of five people (79.4%) were involved in choosing and controlling their support through self-directed support options (based on circumstances where people have a choice).

To support work on social care a People-led Policy Panel was established. The People-led Policy Panel is made up of a diverse group

of people who all have lived experience of adult social care support, including unpaid carers. The members have experience of different kinds of social care support for different purposes and represent a geographical spread across Scotland. The Panel has been working with the Scottish Government to co-produce priorities, work streams and activities for the reform programme, looking at views and evidence from many people about what social care support is like now, what it should be like in the future, and what needs to change to achieve that. The Panel's role is to work with national government, COSLA and other organisations and individuals in the early development and testing of policies. It is one of the ways of making sure that the views, experiences and expertise of people who use social care support are at the heart of decisions that are made. The Panel also works with other existing citizen-led groups to get more detailed insights on specific perspectives or issues.

Recognising the dramatically changed situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the First Minister commissioned the Independent Review on Adult Social Care. Published in February 2021, the Review found many aspects of the adult social care system that are worthy of celebration, such as the introduction of Self-directed Support, the Carer's Act, and our commitment in legislation to integrate health and social care. It also highlighted the gaps between our policy intentions and implementation on the ground. There are some immediate actions the Scottish Government is taking to secure improvement for individuals and the wider social care sector. This Government fully supports the Review's recommendations, particularly those that relate to human rights being at the heart of social care, investing in the workforce and better rights and

support for carers. It will now be for the next Parliament and Government to set out the plans for their full implementation.

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) Transition Fund opened in late 2017 and from late 2019 the upper age limit of the Fund was extended from age 21 years to age 25 years. The number of applications continues to grow. The Fund has become a major provider of transition planning across Scotland, especially for those who have been unable to access support from local authorities and other public bodies during the pandemic. ILF Scotland continues to deliver the following:

1. The ILF Transition Fund has made nearly 3500 grants to date averaging over £2,000 each. Per annum expenditure of this Fund is at £3.5 million, with growth in 2021/22 expected to reach £5 million.
2. ILF Scotland also continues to support 2200 severely disabled people inherited from the UK scheme at its closure in 2015. Awards made directly to disabled people through this ongoing Fund total £43 million per annum.

In 2016, the Scottish Government funded a survey of families with disabled children and young people across Scotland to gather evidence about their information needs. Families said they would favour a centralised resource which signposts relevant information and organisations. The Scottish Government responded to this ask, developing an online resource to Support Disabled Children, Young People and their Families which launched in 2019. The site is rights based and was developed through a process of co-design and co-production. The online resource provides clear, accessible information on national policies, entitlements, rights and the provision of various forms of support which may be available to disabled children, young

people and their families. The guides to policies, legislation and service provision are interspersed with examples of real life stories to showcase best practice.

The Scottish Strategy for Autism: outcomes and priorities 2018-2021, published in March 2018 set out priorities for action through to 2021 to improve outcomes for autistic people living in Scotland. The Scottish Government engaged with autistic people, their families and carers and those with a professional interest on the development of the strategy's final phase. The priorities included reflected the issues raised during engagement as well as including the views of members of the Scottish Strategy for Autism Governance Group.

The keys to life, Scotland's learning disability strategy was published in 2013 and in 2019 the Scottish Government published the [keys to life Implementation Framework 2019-21](#). At the heart of this framework is a commitment that recognises that people with learning disabilities have the same aspirations and expectations as everyone else and who want to play a full part in their communities across Scotland.

Ambition 2: Decent incomes and fairer working lives

The Scottish Government wants to ensure that everyone who wishes to is able to access fair and sustainable employment. However, this is not currently the reality for all. There has been a persistent employment gap between disabled people and the non-disabled working population, leaving many disabled people facing substantial barriers to entering and remaining in the labour market. To help address this, we published [A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People - Employment Action Plan](#) in

December 2018, and committed to reducing the disability employment gap by at least half by 2038. The Employment Action Plan outlines further actions, beyond those originally set out in the Action Plan. The gap between the employment rate of disabled and non-disabled people in 2019 was 32.6 percentage points (ONS Jan-Dec 2019), having reduced by 4.8 percentage points since our baseline year (2016).

In March 2021 the Scottish Government published the [second progress report](#). Key progress includes:

- a) Continued development of mental health guidance and support to better equip employers to offer appropriate support to employees;
- b) Establishing the Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum;
- c) Scottish Government's Children and Families Directorate partnering with ARC Scotland to trial the Principles into Practice programme;
- d) Delivery of the Scottish Government's workplace adjustments pilot, as part of the implementation of its Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People, to improve the co-ordination of adjustments during on-boarding – the period between new employees being offered a contract and starting work;
- e) A Public Social Partnership (PSP) has been established, led by the Scottish Union of Supported Employment to address the barriers that employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people;
 - o Since August 2020 the PSP, which consists of third and public sector organisations, has been gathering evidence on current employer practice, and developing pilot projects that will be delivered over the next year, each designed to ensure that employers have the skills to attract, recruit and retain disabled employees.

- f) Continuing our investment and commitment to improve equality in the workplace, £850,000 was allocated to the Workplace Equality Fund this year. This year, the fund has enabled third sector organisations to work with private employers and public sector employers to address long standing barriers that particular groups face in entering and progressing in the labour market.
- g) After engagement with DPOs and disabled parents to help inform delivery, we are investing a further £5 million of Tackling Child Poverty funding into the Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF) to support disabled parents. This funding boost focusses on supporting unemployed disabled parents to move closer to and into employment, helping to tackle both child poverty and the disability employment gap. This new investment brings the total committed for our Parental Employability Support Fund to over £14 million by the end of 2020-21.

Fair Start Scotland (FSS) started in April 2018 with an initial 3 year referral period. In July 2020, we extended the delivery of FSS services with the current contractors up to 31 March 2023. Scotland's Devolved Employment Statistical Summaries are published quarterly and the most recent performance data published covers up to December 2020 and demonstrates that:

- a) Over 29,000 people to date have started on the service, including 12,929 disabled people.
- b) Over 9000 participants have moved into employment, including 3584 disabled people.
- c) 72% of people starting work went on to sustain employment for three months, 79% of those who sustained employment for three months went on to reach at least six months, and 77% of those

who sustained employment for six months went on to reach at least 12 months

The findings from the [FSS Evaluation Report](#) published in November 2020 also demonstrate that the service has matured over its second year of delivery; that local relationships have been well established and enhanced, that participants value the support provided and that over 9 in 10 participants felt they were treated with dignity and respect.

Of those who joined FSS during the last two and three quarter years, just under half (44%) of people receiving FSS reported being disabled. Recent statistics¹ show that compared to all FSS participants, a lower proportion of disabled people, people who are limited “a lot” by a long term health condition and older people (aged 50 years +) went on to start work after joining FSS. To address this, we are focusing our continuous improvement activity over the coming year on working with service providers to extend their reach to and delivery for disabled people, minority ethnic communities and other groups as directed by our evaluation feedback and performance data.

We continue to work with FSS service providers to flex the delivery model ensuring that participants receive support that is tailored to their needs, with further improvements to the service being informed by the external reviews of Individual Placement Support (to be published during 2021) and Supported Employment Review (likely to be undertaken in 2021).

¹ Published 24 February 2021: [Scotland's Devolved Employment Services: statistical summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-devolved-employment-services-statistical-summary-2021/pages/10-to-15.aspx)

We continued to invest in our employability services throughout 2020-21 and in 2021-22, the FSS budget will increase to £27 million – approximately £5.8 million more than the previous year in order to ensure that FSS is appropriately funded to deliver for those who most need support.

We recognise that COVID-19 is already having a huge public health and economic impact in Scotland, and that the longer term employment opportunities of disabled people in particular are likely to be impacted. Whilst some of the planned work may need to be reprioritised in light of COVID-19, the Scottish Government remains committed to addressing inequalities in the labour market during the pandemic including taking action to try to minimise the negative impact on disabled people. Key to recovery efforts is the Young Person's Guarantee which, within two years, aims to ensure every young person aged between 16 and 24 will have the opportunity to study; take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience, or participate in formal volunteering.

The enhanced contribution rates providing disabled people or those with experience of care with the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship (MA) funding for their chosen Frameworks up to the age of 29 was launched in April 2017. Enhanced funding for MAs continues to be offered up to the age of 29 for disabled and care experienced young people. This recognises that these young people often enter the labour market later than their peers. In 2019/20, 1,547 individuals were supported by this funding. In 2019/20, following consultation with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) contracted training providers worked with Scottish

Government, to simplify the eligibility criteria and process for claiming Enhanced Funding for 2020/21.

We are continuing to support Health Boards to increase the number of people with learning disabilities employed by them. This includes reviewing annually the number of Health Boards that are participating in the Project SEARCH employment programme, and supporting the Government's Neurodevelopmental Support Team with next steps on Project SEARCH proposals. We will annually review the contents of the Learning Disability Toolkit to ensure that the links are up to date, and review periodically with our Equality and Diversity Leads to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Since 2016, the Scottish Government has run an internship for disabled people to work in the NHS. Between 2016 and 2018 40 disabled graduates were employed by the NHS. 97% of participants went on to a positive outcome or work or higher education and 55% progressed into the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland. For the "We Can Work" programme, to date, where information has been returned, there is a 68% success rate for interns going from "under or unemployed" into permanent paid employment in fitting with their career aspirations. A further 20% chose to pursue further education, with only 12% remaining unemployed.

The Scottish Government established Social Security Scotland in 2018 to deliver benefits, including disability benefits. The co-produced [Social Security Charter](#) states that the Agency will treat people with dignity, fairness and respect – principles that underpin the development of Scotland's social security programme.

Continued engagement with stakeholders and clients through User Research and Stakeholder Reference working groups such as the Disability and Carers Benefits Expert Advisory Group, as well as our Experience Panels at each stage of the development of our services, has shaped the programme, particularly in terms of accessibility and in taking a person-centred approach.

The new Child Disability Payment will start to be rolled out in summer 2021 and fully delivered in autumn 2021. The Adult Disability Payment will follow to be delivered by summer 2022. They are replacing existing benefits so the key difference for disabled people will be improvements in the process.

We are co-designing the end to end process from application to award, with people with experience of the current system. This includes replacing assessments with client consultations. Assessments are usually face to face whereas consultations will take place in a range of ways, including over the phone. Assessments can include functional examinations. Consultations will only involve a discussion with a practitioner. Consultations will be based on dignity, fairness and respect, and only cover any additional information needed to make an entitlement decision. We have committed to protecting disability assistance by ensuring that it will not be means tested.

We introduced the brand new Child Winter Heating Assistance benefit in 2020. This automatic benefit is provided to the families of 14,000 severely disabled children and young people on the highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance. This provided £200 to

each eligible child or young person, to help reduce the financial pressures faced by families caused by winter heating costs throughout the day and at night. We are the only part of the UK to do this, and Social Security Scotland has made payments with a total value of £2.7 million.

We have a duty to encourage benefit take up and we work hard to ensure everyone is encouraged to get the financial support they are entitled to. We will ensure this is the case for recipients of our disability benefits.

The Social Security Scotland agency provides information in a range of accessible formats to help people understand the system to guarantee that disabled people are not disadvantaged by communication barriers. The agency is developing an inclusive communication strategy, underpinned in law, to ensure people can engage with the organisation in a manner that best suits them. An Inclusive Communication Reference Group has been created and includes over 20 representatives from organisations across a wide range of client groups. This group provides expert advice to ensure that inclusive communication principles are embedded across the organisation.

From 1st April 2017 to 31 March 2021 inclusive, the Scottish Government has provided the Family Fund with over £12.5 million to deliver grants to families on low incomes raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people for items they might otherwise not afford, including IT and white goods. The total number of grants provided to families from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021 is predicted to be over 26,000.

Since the launch in September 2018, over 400,000 Carer's Allowance Supplement payments have been made totalling over £108 million to 105,795 carers. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on both carers and carer services, around 80,000 eligible carers received an extra one-off special payment of £230.10. Through Carer's Allowance Supplement and this special payment, carers in Scotland will receive £690.30 more than carers south of the border in 2020/21. This is an extra investment of £19.2 million, bringing our total investment to almost £350 million in 2020/21.

The Young Carer Grant is now a payment of £305.10, a figure which is up-rated annually. Between the launch in October 2019 and 31 July 2020 almost £500,000 has been invested into supporting young carers in Scotland. In response to pandemic, the rules about the timing of applications have been relaxed so that if a young carer applies after their 19th birthday, their application can be treated as though it were on time, if they were delayed in applying due to the pandemic. These changes are in force from April 2020 to March 2021 and may be extended.

Ambition 3: Places that are accessible to everyone

[A Culture Strategy for Scotland](#) was published in February 2020. It recognises Scottish Government support for equal opportunities, which includes ensuring disabled people can lead the cultural life of their choice with all aspects of cultural engagement – formal and informal – available to them. Tackling barriers to participation remains a priority for the culture sector in Scotland.

From 2016 to March 2020 a total of 1,124 homes were delivered through our [Affordable Housing Supply Programme](#) for disabled people including homes specifically for wheelchair users. The Scottish Government continues to provide strategic funding to [Housing Options Scotland](#) (HOS). Operating on a Scotland wide basis, they specialise in finding appropriate housing solutions for disabled people and people with serious health concerns. In 2019-20, HOS helped 690 clients.

Guidance on wheelchair accessible housing target was issued 2019. The requirements for local authorities to set targets across all tenures and report annually are in place.

In our 2018-19 Programme for Government, we committed to plan together with stakeholders for how our homes and communities should look and feel in 2040 and the options and choices to get there. Housing 2040 (H2040) is a 20 year strategy that sets out the Scottish Government's 20-year vision for housing in Scotland. It will recognise the importance of everyone having a home that is safe, high quality, affordable and meets their needs in the place they want to be, H2040 will set out a vision for what the Scottish Government wants homes and communities to look and feel like for the people of Scotland.

As part of our development and consultation processes we have listened carefully to what disabled people and older people have told us about the need for improved accessibility and flexibility in new homes. The H2040 strategy is due to be published soon.

The Scottish Government is currently preparing National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), a long term plan for the development of Scotland. NPF4 will address six high level outcomes, including: meeting the

housing needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular, the housing needs for disabled people and older people; improving the health and well-being of people living in Scotland; and improving equality and eliminating discrimination.

The Scottish Government absolutely supports the principle of disabled people being involved in shaping the places where they stay. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 contains a requirement for local authority local development plan evidence reports to include a statement on the steps taken to seek the views of disabled people, and the extent to which those views have been taken into account. The 2019 Act also requires the evidence report to contain a summary of the action taken by the planning authority to support and promote the construction and adaptation of housing to meet the housing needs of disabled people and older people.

We have recently laid in Parliament new legislation amending requirements for pre-application consultation (PAC) with communities on national and major development. This is due to come into force on 1 October 2021. PAC will continue to include powers for planning authorities to require additional consultation as part of PAC, specifying with whom the prospective applicant must consult and in what form. Our 2020 consultation on the changes to PAC sought views on related guidance, including with regard to consultation with disabled people and Access Panels. We will be developing new guidance on PAC in light of those responses in the coming months.

The [Accessible Travel Framework](#) published in 2016 has been making progress in relation to its 4 outcomes agreed by disabled people. A

move to an [Annual Delivery plan](#) was published in summer 2019 and set out 8 priority areas. A Progress Report (including easy read version) was published in January 2021 showing progress on the 2019-2020 Delivery Plan and actions taken to support disabled people as a result of the pandemic².

The revisions to the Scottish building standards system in 2019 introduced a requirement for Changing Places Toilets to be installed in certain types of large new non-domestic building types. The buildings covered include for example large retail buildings such as shops and malls; secondary schools providing community facilities; hospitals; assembly buildings, for example: churches, sports pavilions and stadia, museums, galleries and passenger stations for air, rail road, or sea travel and entertainment buildings, which include for example: conferences halls, exhibition and leisure centres, theatres and cinemas.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is committed to developing and promoting inclusive access for all to the historic environment. In July 2019, HES updated its [Access Guide](#) which gives access-related information for 80 of its sites. In March 2020, HES published its [British Sign Language \(BSL\) Plan 2020-24](#) setting out its ambitions in relation to communication and engagement with Deaf BSL users and the Deaf community.

² Accessible Travel Delivery Plan: Progress Report - 2019/2020 (transport.gov.scot)

Ambition 4: Protected rights

The Scottish Government has worked with Disabled People's Organisations and Police Scotland to raise awareness of hate crime and encourage greater reporting of disability hate crimes. We launched hate crime campaigns in 2017, 2018 and 2020. The 2020 'Letters from Scotland' campaign was in response to concerns raised, including from disability organisations, that there had been an increase in hate incidents throughout the pandemic, both offline and online. Transport Scotland have committed to a Hate Crime Charter on public transport and a pilot was run from December 2019 to January 2020 on both bus and rail.

[Equally Safe](#) explicitly recognises the intersectionality of disability and gender based violence and will continue to explore actions to support disabled women and girls who experience it. Work is underway to look at gender based violence and learning disabilities. An action plan will be produced in 2021 to improve education on sex and healthy relationships, sexual and reproductive health for people with learning disabilities. The Key Messages on Healthy Relationships and Consent are being adapted into an Easy Read version, and materials on relationships, sexual health and parenting are being added to the [RSHP national online resource](#) for teachers later this year.

The Supporting Offenders with Learning Disabilities (SOLD) Network, funded through Community Justice, works to improve the understanding of the needs of people with communication support needs in the Justice system, including support for autistic people. Working collaboratively

with the Law Society Scotland and other partners including Police, Courts and Scottish Prison Service, the group has been working to address the needs of vulnerable people in the justice system. SOLD have recently published their [Practice Guide for Defence Solicitors in Scotland](#), which is the latest in a series of publications and complements their [Practice Guide for Support Staff in the Criminal Justice System](#). Work is continuing on ways to improve the Criminal Justice pathway and improve support for people with communication support needs.

The [National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership](#) was established in early 2019, in response to the recommendations made in December 2018 by the [First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership](#). The Taskforce worked to develop recommendations (which it published in March 2021) for a statutory framework for human rights that can bring internationally recognised human rights into domestic law and protect the human rights of every member of Scottish Society.

The First Minister's Advisory Group recommended that a wide range of human rights be included in a new statutory framework for human rights, including: civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; environmental rights; and further specific rights belonging to children, women, disabled people, on race and rights for older persons, and for LGBTI people. In the 2020-21 Programme for Government, we committed to continue work on the Taskforce, to deliver a radical blueprint for this human rights legislation covering all areas of devolved responsibility. This included a commitment to actively consider the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), working closely with key stakeholders in this

sector. We are proud that the government-led National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership has recently recommended incorporation of UNCRPD, as part of a new and comprehensive statutory human rights framework to be taken forward in the next Parliamentary term.

To reach its recommendations, the National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership undertook a wide range of engagement with public bodies, civil society organisations and many others. This included over forty Taskforce-led engagements, with two roundtables specifically focused on rights for disabled people, and a UNCRPD reference group which explored the possibilities of UNCRPD incorporation in detail.

Furthermore, the Taskforce was also guided by papers from an Academic Advisory Panel of human rights experts, papers from stakeholders and the 'All Our Rights in Law' project led by the Human Rights Consortium Scotland and the Scottish Human Rights Commission, which fed directly into the Taskforce's considerations.

Ambition 5: Active participation

The Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland) supported 39 disabled candidates to stand for election to local councils in 2017. 15 candidates were elected across Scotland, representing a range of disabilities, political parties and were gender balanced. We have maintained the fund for the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections.

In 2017 the Scottish Government and COSLA announced that at least 1% of local government budgets would be decided through participatory budgeting (PB) by the end of 2021 and agreed a Framework for the operation of the agreement. The Scottish Government worked with Glasgow Disability Alliance to explore how best disabled people can play

a full part in PB processes and how PB can be used to encourage participation in public life, advance equality of opportunity and support accessible and inclusive processes. A National Participatory Budgeting Strategic Group was established in 2020 to help guide this work.

The level of investment for Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) has been maintained throughout this parliamentary session, and funding has been extended until September 2021, and in some cases the level of Scottish Government investment increased. This funding has enabled DPOs to have to the capacity to work with Government to enable us to better understand the views and needs of disabled people across many areas of life.

We have worked with a number of DPOs, disability organisations and wider public and third sector bodies to support their COVID-19 work by producing accessible versions of public health information, such as BSL, Easy Read, Braille, XXL Print and Moon, as well as producing information in a range of community languages and supporting helplines. We have also provided funding for IT and training to help disabled people who have not been connected to the internet keep up to date with public health messages and to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

The Scottish Government's first national strategy to tackle social isolation and loneliness and build stronger social connections, [A Connected Scotland](#), was published on 18 December 2018. The strategy considered four main priorities which prioritised community cohesion and empowerment, tackling stigma, encouraging kindness and creating the opportunities and infrastructure that allow people to build connections.

As part of our cross government approach, our commitment to tackling social isolation and loneliness has only increased as we have seen how all our lives have changed over the course of 2020.

With Inclusion Scotland we have trialled a project that provided mentored public body board experience for a group of disabled people, as part of our work to develop the pipeline of talented people for public appointments. For 2019 (last published figures available), 12% of people appointed were disabled compared to 7% in 2018 and 13% of applications were from disabled people in 2019 compared to 9% in 2018. We will shortly be starting a project to involve disabled people and people from a minority ethnic background in the infrastructure of the public appointments process.

What else has happened since the publication of A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People in 2016?

The Action Plan was a starting point to promote action towards achieving disability equality in Scotland. Since the Action Plan was written, other supportive strategies, plans and actions have been created and delivered. These have both built on the momentum of the Action Plan and taken the original aims and ambitions further in a number of cases. They have developed targeted responses to specific issues, highlighted as important by disabled people.

In 2017 we published the [British Sign Language \(BSL\) National Plan](#). The BSL National Advisory Group was a collaboration of Deaf and Deafblind BSL users, which worked alongside Scottish public bodies for 18 months to help shape Scotland's first BSL National Plan, reflecting a truly co-productive approach. The plan's long term aim is ambitious; it is to make Scotland the best place in the world for people whose first or preferred language is BSL to live, work and visit. The BSL National Plan sets out ten long-term goals for BSL in Scotland, covering early years and education; training and work; health, mental health and wellbeing; transport; culture and the arts; justice and democracy. An update report on progress in delivering the actions in the BSL National Plan will be published in autumn 2021.

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the recognition that planning for the future must involve people and communities, in the summer of 2020 the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older

People announced the creation of a **Social Renewal Advisory Board** (SRAB). Stakeholders from the third sector, think-tanks, equality organisations, and local government came together, recognised that the impacts of the pandemic have not been felt equally and made recommendations that could renew Scotland post pandemic.

As part of the SRAB, an Age and Disability Policy Circle was formed to discuss the impact the pandemic has had on disabled people, older people, and carers and to make recommendations to overcome current inequality. The work was also informed by lived experience. Community Listening Events were held in 31 local authorities across Scotland, where we asked individuals what the impact of the pandemic had been for them, how it had changed their lives and how they wanted to live post-pandemic– “what does a good life look like to you?” In addition four focus groups were specifically held with equality groups – women, disabled people, older people and young people.

The final independent report, [If not now, when?](#) was published in January 2021. It sets out 20 calls to action that the Board recommends be taken to result in a renewed Scotland that proactively addresses inequality and supports people to fully realise their human rights.

Measuring progress

In 2019 we published Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people, an analysis of the [National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) outcome indicators from the perspective of disability. We have used the NPF indicators again in 2021 to measure how disabled people's experience of living in Scotland contrasts to non-disabled peoples experience. Using established data that will be monitored on an on-going basis, is enabling us to track progress towards equality.

We also published a [progress update in 2019](#)³ on the implementation of the Action Plan, setting out areas of progress and delivery under each of the five ambitions within the plan⁴. In addition to this overarching monitoring, a number of actions have their own monitoring and evaluation frameworks to specifically measure the impact they are having.

Scottish Government will continue to draw on this wide range of data, alongside expert advice and lived experience, to determine what should be the focus of future work to promote disability equality.

³ An easy read version of the report can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-progress-report-2019-easy-read/>

⁴ In 2019, we also published an analysis of the National Performance Framework (NPF) outcome indicators from the perspective of disability: Scotland's Wellbeing: national outcomes for disabled people. The report can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-wellbeing-measuring-national-outcomes-disabled-people/>

Impact of COVID-19 on Disabled People

Whilst the NPF report enables us to track on-going progress towards equality, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused new and exacerbated issues for disabled people. Throughout 2020 and into 2021, a wide range of organisations have been working closely with their membership and the public to understand the impact that the pandemic, and the restrictions that have been implemented, have had on disabled people. Scottish Government has produced and published [an analytical paper](#) which provides data on the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people from national research and surveys, research and intelligence gathering by Disabled People's Organisations to give a more complete understanding of the impact on individuals.

This research material in the analytical paper has supported and influenced the work that Scottish Government has done, enabling the response to the pandemic to be adjusted where possible to minimise harms and difficulties for disabled people whilst still maintaining its key aim of protecting life.

We will draw from this work, as well as the wider work on disability equality as we consider next steps in the next Parliament.

Views from participants at the Disability Summit

In December 2020, Scottish Government held a virtual Disability Summit. Discussion sessions were held and participants were asked:

1. How has life changed for disabled people in these areas over the last four years?
2. What is the most important work for the Scottish Government in next five years?

Below we have included a short summary of information gathered at the event. Comments are grouped under the five ambitions set out in the Action Plan.

These views gathered directly from disabled people will be used to inform work to promote disability equality in the next Parliament. We will use this to inform both what the priority areas for work are, as well as informing us what specific issues are occurring for disabled people and how we can better take forward work in the future. We will continue to engage directly with disabled people and DPOs in the next Parliament as we agree future work.

We recognise that effective solutions to the problems and barriers faced by disabled people must be drawn from the lived experience of disabled people. We are committed to working with disabled people to develop policies and the approaches required to solve problems and dismantle barriers.

1. How has life changed for disabled people in these areas over the last 4 years?

Support services that meet disabled people's needs

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic some support packages for disabled people have been reduced or cut by some local authorities. There was a consensus that policy on social care is positive and shows ambition but there is a clear difference between the policy and local implementation. In addition, it was highlighted that there is often inconsistency geographically for people regarding access to services.

Where support is provided remotely, i.e. over the phone or online, it needs to be made accessible for all; other issues should be considered such as access to broadband or an appropriate device in order to navigate information which contributes to digital exclusion.

Decent incomes and fairer working lives

We heard about the challenges that people have faced in 2020, however in more than one group there was a recognition that this crisis has provided a chance for change and that more people are open to doing things differently. For example, employment practices have changed; participants highlighted that due to the pandemic, businesses have allowed employees to work from home, making employment more accessible for some; how we conduct events such as conferences has changed, and in some cases how we access culture has changed. We need to ensure this is capitalised on.

There were concerns that people are losing jobs, and a recognition that there needs to be more focus on support for disabled young people, including transitions into employment. This applies more widely to disabled people in work.

It was suggested that organisations with lived experience of disability who can offer person-centred support to get disabled people into employment should be supported.

Accessibility

Participants highlighted that still not enough buildings are accessible, in particular due to the restrictions on listed buildings. Ensuring all buildings are accessible should be addressed at the planning stage with disabled people consulted during development.

Access to public transport was recognised as having improved with more buses and taxis being accessible, although there is still a lack of dropped kerbs on pavements for access.

Non-accessible homes are being offered to homeless/vulnerable disabled people with homeless organisations being unable support people as they don't have enough resources or information.

Access to BSL interpreters hasn't always been easy in the past.

Protected Rights

Disabled people should be more included in policy development. Information should be readily available in a range of accessible versions such as Easy Read.

The current pandemic has highlighted that many disabled people are digitally excluded. As technology became a key part of communication we need to ensure people are not left behind without access to information.

Active Participation

Stigma and general attitudes towards learning difficulties and other disabilities have improved in recent years although issues around increasing hate crimes in the current situation remained.

2. What is the most important work for the Scottish Government in next five years?

- a) There was consensus that there should be a focus on action rather than a focus on concerns and issues.
- b) People with lived experience must be listened to and where possible work should be co-produced.
- c) Disabled people should be included in every aspect of life and not on a voluntary basis.
- d) Disabled people should be able to work or study from home where possible going forward. This would enable more disabled people to join the workforce.
- e) There should be a focus on digital inclusion going forward in order to combat loneliness and ensure disabled people are getting the same information.
- f) For people developing a disability later in life, information on support systems and packages should be more clear and readily available in order to support their transitions.
- g) Social care and health support needs to recognise people as individuals. Access should be consistent across Scotland and bureaucracy should be reduced.

We will use these views to direct our work as it is progressed in the next Parliament.

Conclusion

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People has laid the groundwork for further progress towards equality. Over the past 5 years, in many different areas, good work that promotes and progresses the rights of disabled people has been taken forward. The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had a disproportionate impact on disabled people and has halted some of the gains made towards equality. However, it has in some situations seen positive progress made at a rapid pace and has brought about a wider public awareness of inequality.

To achieve equality will take more time, but the work undertaken is a good start. The next Scottish Government will have the recommendations of the Social Renewal Advisory Board and the Independent Review of Adult Social Care to consider, both of which are significantly focused on the promotion of equality and a human rights approach. In addition the National Taskforce for Human Rights recommendation to incorporate UNCRPD, as part of a new and comprehensive statutory human rights framework to be taken forward in the next Parliamentary term will further underpin the rights of disabled people in Scotland.

Annex: A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Actions and work delivered

Action	Action	Response
<p>Ambition 1: Support services that promote independent living, meet needs and work together to enable a life of choices, opportunities and participation</p>		
1.	<p>We will continue to support our transformational approach by investing in Self-directed Support. The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 introduced a new approach which gives adults, children and carers more choice and control over how their care and support is delivered. Our ambition for Self-directed Support goes beyond services being person-centred: it is about true choice and control to enable everyone to have more control over their lives, with greater choice and opportunity.</p>	<p>Funded by Scottish Government, the Social Work Scotland Self-directed Support team has developed a draft framework and a set of standards to make self-directed support a reality. Of the total number of people receiving social care support there has been an increase in the number involved in choosing and controlling their support through self-direct support options. This is provided in the 'Insights for Social Care: statistics for Scotland' for 2018/19 which estimates that nearly four out of five (79.4%) people were involved in choosing and controlling their support through self-directed support options (based on circumstances where people have a choice).</p>
2.	<p>We are working with local authorities, providers, disabled people and other partners to deliver reform to adult social care. This will consider the commissioning of residential care and the role of new models</p>	<p>Together with the People-led Policy Panel (made up of people with lived experience and unpaid carers), COSLA, local government, social care providers, Health and Social Care Partnerships and other partners, we developed a vision, priorities and set of work streams for a reform programme for adult social care support, published in June 2019. The work streams were focused on key areas of improvement in adult social care, including models of care and support, commissioning and procurement, investment, consistency, and workforce conditions and skills. The onset of the</p>

	<p>of care and support in home care. This will enable progress towards our aim to end 'time and task' based care and shift to care that focuses on achieving independent living for people who use social care services. In the summer of 2017 we will also consult on the terms of a future review of long-term care capacity. The voices and experiences of service users, including disabled people and the organisations that represent them, will be at the centre of these reforms and will shape planning and implementation and improve outcomes.</p>	<p>pandemic in early 2020 meant much of this work was paused. However, we have continued to progress a project to design and test a framework of practice for self-directed support in social care across Scotland; extended the Support in the Right Direction Fund to April 2022 to secure independent support for people and carers using or seeking social care support; and continued working with stakeholders to further embed Fair Work principles in social care and achieve better terms and conditions and more rewarding roles for the social care workforce. Prior to the pandemic, our work with iHUB on integrating the valuable support that communities offer with our formal health and social care systems as part of the reform programme's work on models of care supported a further five Health and Social Care Partnerships to join the Community-led Support Programme.</p> <p>As part of the Programme for Government 2020-21, the First Minister announced an Independent Review of Adult Social Care in September 2020 to ensure that we can address the challenges and opportunities that face adult social care in Scotland. Many of these challenges are not new, but have been highlighted and intensified by the pandemic. The Independent Review reported on 3 February 2021, and Ministers will be carefully considering the review report's recommendations, which provides a strong basis for improving adult social care services, as the Government is committed to ensuring we have effective, person-centred, sustainable social care support that is right for everyone, now and in the future.</p>
3.	<p>Building on the contribution of 'Our Shared Ambition for the future of social care support in Scotland', we will continue to engage with disabled people and carers to develop a set of outcomes we wish to collectively achieve. This will include whether new models of delivery are required to achieve these</p>	<p>Scottish Government continue to work with Inclusion Scotland to create a network of existing citizen-led groups so that an even wider range of voices of disabled people and carers are involved in co-producing the reform work.</p>

	outcomes within a challenging financial context.	
4.	We will work with COSLA and with disabled people and the organisations that represent them to identify ways of improving the portability of care packages where a disabled person moves between local authority areas	One of the work streams within the Social Work Scotland (SWS) Self-directed Support (SDS) Framework and Standards project is Consistency of Care. This work stream aims to look at how supported people moving from one local authority to another can expect their agreed personal outcomes to be met. These standards will form part of the wider proposed SDS Framework which will be designed to assist local authorities with implementing SDS successfully and consistently. The Framework will provide helpful tools and resources that have been developed since the inception of the Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 by key partners.
5.	Building on the successful establishment of the new Scottish Independent Living Fund (ILF), through which we have safeguarded the support packages that Scottish disabled people were previously getting from the ILF towards meeting care and support costs after the scheme was scrapped by the UK Government, we will launch an ILF scheme for new users. On top of the £47.2 million a year for support of the scheme's 2,700 existing Scottish users, a further £5 million a year of new funding will be available. We are developing the new scheme in co-production with disabled	<p>The ILF Transition Fund opened on 20 Dec 2017 and is now 3 years into operation. The upper age limit of the Fund was extended from age 21 years to age 25 years, from November 2019. Despite a slightly reduced average grant there is continuing growth in applications.</p> <p>The Fund has become a major provider of both transition planning across Scotland, especially for those who have been unable, during the COVID-19 pandemic, to access support from local authorities and other public bodies.</p> <p>Continuing ILF Scotland core deliveries are being maintained around the two existing ILF schemes – namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ILF Transition Fund has made near 3500 grants to date averaging over £2,000 each. Per annum expenditure of this Fund is at £3.5 m, with growth in 21/22 expected to reach £5m. 2. ILF Scotland also continues to support 2200 severely disabled people inherited from the UK scheme at its closure in 2015. Awards made directly to disabled people through this ongoing Fund total £43 m per annum. <p>The Independent Review of Social Care is a comprehensive and fundamental review of all adult social care in Scotland, and the principle aim is to consider changes and recommend improvements to achieve the highest attainable standard of support for people who use adult social care services. In consequence of this</p>

	<p>people, carers, representative organisations and local authorities. The new users' fund will open within the next year, to make the right support available to allow disabled people to live a fuller, more rewarding life. This will include support to access social connections and opportunities which enable a life of meaning, purpose and belonging.</p>	<p>Review a number of potentially significant implications for ILF activity in Scotland are likely to arise in 21/22.</p>
6.	<p>By spring 2018 we will have new National Health and Social Care Standards in place which put human rights, dignity, compassion and wellbeing at the heart of all health, social work and social care services across Scotland. The Standards will focus on improving services and delivering person-led outcomes for all. This will make a material difference to how services for disabled people are delivered and assessed.</p>	<p>The Health and Social Care Standards - My support, my life ("the Standards") were published in June 2017 and took effect on 1st April 2018. The Standards are underpinned by five principles:</p> <p>Dignity and respect; Compassion; Be included; Responsive care and support; and Wellbeing.</p> <p>These are helping to improve the quality of services in health, social care, early learning, childcare, children's services, social work and community justice.</p>
7.	<p>£3 million has been committed between 2015-2018 to fund the Active and Independent Living Improvement Programme which finds innovative ways to help disabled people lead healthy</p>	<p>The Active and Independent Living Improvement Programme (AILP), which finds innovative ways to help disabled people lead healthy lives and stay in their own homes, was announced in 2015 as an ongoing focus for the contribution of allied health professionals (AHPs) to supporting the population's health and wellbeing. £3 million was committed in the first years of the programme (2016-18) during which time the programme prioritised work with children and young people, helping people</p>

	<p>lives and stay in their own homes. The programme is focused on the contribution of Allied Health Professionals (including physiotherapists and occupational therapists) and in 2016-2018 it will prioritise work with children and young people, helping people get into or remain in work, supporting people with dementia, people who have musculoskeletal conditions, people who experience frailty and are at risk of falls, as well as supporting people with their overall health and wellbeing and anticipatory care.</p>	<p>get into or remain in work, supporting people with dementia, people who have musculoskeletal conditions, people who experience frailty and are at risk of falls, supporting people with their overall health and wellbeing and anticipatory care as well as leading in the development and delivery of new and innovative digital solutions to augment the package of care offered. It was agreed to continue these priorities in 2018 and a further £1 million has been invested to support this work. Anticipating the conclusion of AILP, in late February of 2020 Scottish Government began the process of evaluating the programme with a broad range of stakeholders. This review was paused in March as a consequence of Covid 19. At this time, our attentions remain focused on pandemic response, therefore the review will remain on pause until later in 2021.</p>
8.	<p>The 'Our Voice' programme will support people to engage purposefully at individual, community and national level to improve health and social care services (2016-2017).</p>	<p>When launched in 2015, the Our Voice initiative was designed to support engagement in service improvement at an individual, local and national level, and empower people to be equal partners in their care. This action has been developed further by introducing a Voices Scotland training programme which provides people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to have their voices heard in shaping local and national health and social care services. The Our Voice programme has been mainstreamed into the work of the directorate. We continue to work close with the Our Voice key partners and its principles underpin all that we do.</p> <p>Our Voice continues to develop as a framework that supports everyone who wants to get involved in improving health and social care in Scotland, including disabled people and others who use health and social care services, staff and managers.</p>

9.	Our 'Routes to Inclusion' project provided valuable feedback from disabled people about what is important to them, and how they want to be engaged. We will share the project findings with the Health and Social Care Joint Integration Boards to help them establish effective engagement with disabled people about their health and social care in their local areas.	Inclusion Scotland were funded by Scottish Government to run the 'Routes to Inclusion' Health and Social Care Integration Engagement project. The successful project provided valuable feedback from disabled people about what was important to them, and how they wanted to be engaged. It found that disabled people were not being engaged with over decisions on their health and social care at a local level.
10.	We will commence the Carers Act on 1 April 2018 so that carers of disabled people and disabled people themselves will be better supported.	<p>The Carers Act commenced on the 1 April 2018. It put in place a system of carers' rights designed to listen to carers; improve consistency of support; and prevent problems – helping sustain caring relationships and protect carers' health and wellbeing – set out in our Carers' charter. This includes each carer's right to a personalised plan to identify what is important to them and their needs for support. Every area must also have a local carer strategy and carer information and advice service.</p> <p>Since its commencement the Scottish Government continues to work with partners to ensure carers are aware of and take up their rights under the Carers Act so that carers of disabled people and disabled people themselves are better supported. An updated Carers Act Implementation is now in development..</p>
11.	In December 2016, we will publish the next Mental Health Strategy which will set out our 10-year vision for transforming mental health in Scotland. The Strategy will be built around a lifespan: start well, live well, age	The Mental Health Strategy was published in March 2017. Work was successfully progressing with the delivery of this plan but was paused in March 2020 in order to focus on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan was issued in October 2020 and incorporates outstanding actions from the Mental Health Strategy, Work is currently under way on next steps for the Mental Health Strategy and a report will be issued in early 2021

	well. Early intervention will be central, with a focus on child and adolescent mental health, and we will continue our emphasis on improving access to mental health services, so that people can 'ask once and get help fast'.	
12.	We will support the integration of mental and physical health treatment so that we achieve parity of esteem and reduce stigma. We have announced an additional £150 million for mental health services over five years, part of which will support access to mental health services.	<p>Commitment 3.1 from the Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan, issued on the 8th October 2020 will build on the Equality Impact Assessments carried out on the Mental Health Strategy 2017-27. We will continue to work with equalities and mental health organisations to look at the causes of mental health inequality at a structural and individual level.</p> <p>The £150m was used to help support delivery of the mental health strategy and service improvements over five years from 2017-18 to 2021-22. It is/was spent on delivering a range of Strategy commitments and latterly also funded the work of the former Children & Young People Taskforce. It included over £1m over 2016-17 to 2019-20 on the SAMH ALBA pilot to support people with mental illness to become more physically active (this project is now closed). We're still evaluating the 2021 22 budget which has the added complexity of COVID-19 consequential but we can say that direct investment in mental health will increase by nearly 19% to £139 million and will support overall spending on mental health in excess of £1.1 billion.</p> <p>Our on-going work on this action links with our 2020 Programme for Government commitment to take a cross-government approach to further developing our policies to support high-risk groups, including groups whose risks have become more evident in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
13.	We are committed to a review that will consider whether the provisions in the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) 2003 Act fulfils the needs of people with learning disabilities and autism.	The review of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) 2003 Act was reported in December 2019 . The final report makes over one hundred recommendations that are comprehensive and wide-ranging and cover a number of different areas of policy including human rights, legal capacity, equalities, independent living, hospital admissions and the criminal justice system. Three further supplementary reports were published in January 2020 - an easy read

		version of the final report, an overview of the evidence gathered for the report and a report on the process that the Review team developed and used for this Review.
14.	We will empower disabled people to know and claim their rights following the changes in the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015 by promoting independent advocacy and advance statements, alongside taking a rights-based approach in the statutory guidance on the use of mental health legislation to be in place in 2017.	We want to empower disabled people to know and claim their rights. In partnership with stakeholders, we have been undertaking a review and revision of the existing Code of Practice which accompanies the Mental Health (Care and Treatment)(Scotland) Act 2003. By adopting a human rights approach we will ensure that those discharging their statutory functions under the 2003 Act involve patients in decisions regarding their own care and treatment. The revised Code of Practice has been delayed due to COVID and will therefore be published in due course.
15.	We will work with disabled people and the organisations that represent them to develop changes to the Adults with Incapacity Act, in relation to deprivation of liberty, and to assess compliance with UNCRPD by 2018.	A public consultation took place in 2018 on Adults with Incapacity (AWI) legislative reform and in 2019 the Minister for Mental Health announced an independent review of mental health and incapacity law to address the issues raised by disabled people, chaired by John Scott QC. Future work on AWI reform will depend on the findings of the independent review. We will engage with disabled people to ascertain their views and hear proposals for AWI reform ahead of the review's findings in due course.
16.	We will review policies on guardianship and consider circumstances in which supported decision making can be promoted.	In 2017 we undertook an extensive stakeholder engagement programme on wide changes to the Adults with Incapacity Act ahead of publication of a consultation paper early in 2018. This included speaking to disabled people and their representatives. After the consultation working groups were set up to look at the results of the consultation and to take this work forward. This included organisations representing disabled groups and those with dementia. The Scott Review (https://www.mentalhealthlawreview.scot/) was announced in March 2019 and is looking at supported decision making and the requirements of the UNCRPD. Work

		<p>on the Codes of Practice for powers of attorney is well advanced and has taken account of supported decision making and UNCRPD requirements.</p>
17.	<p>The 'Keys to Life', published in 2013, is a 10-year strategy to improve the quality of life for people with learning disabilities. With a £7.7 million investment we are improving learning disability services in Scotland. The strategy's implementation plan sets out four strategic outcomes which relate to the UNCRPD: 'A Healthy Life'; 'Choice and Control'; 'Independence'; and 'Active Citizenship'. The delivery of the Strategy is being taken forward with a wide range of partners in the statutory and third sectors and is focused on phased priorities targeted at each of the four outcomes. We will begin work early in 2017 to review progress and identify priorities for the next phase of implementation.</p>	<p>The implementation plan for 2019-21 was published in March 2019. Many of the priorities in the plan have been completed and the progress is being tracked. Since March 2020 we have been working with stakeholders across learning disabilities and autism on emerging issues during the pandemic. This has led to the development of our new plan for learning disability and autism, which is due to be published in partnership with COSLA. This plan reflects the experiences of people during the pandemic, and places human rights as its central focus. This Towards Transformation Plan is the start of a conversation, with people with learning disabilities at the centre of, and leading, those conversations.</p>

18.	We will work across the Scottish Government to ensure we gather data on the services used to support those with learning disabilities to ensure the services they need are delivering the best outcomes to support independent living.	A Short Life Working Group on Delayed Discharge was established with COSLA, to develop solutions for the cohort of delayed discharges with learning disabilities or enduring mental health problems for people who remain in hospital. This group is also considering funding options and has reported their short term recommendations. One of the aims of the group is to improve the person centred commissioning of services so that people's needs are met. This group has reported to Ministers and a report is soon to be published. We will also be led by the findings from the Social Care Review.
19.	The Scottish Strategy for Autism is a 10-year strategy (2011-2021) that aims to improve access to integrated service provision, highlight good practice, and build capacity and awareness of autism in services to ensure people with autism are understood. We will begin work early in 2017 to identify gaps and priorities for 2017-2019.	<p>In 2018, after passing the strategy's halfway point, and conscious of the significant shifts that have taken place in Scotland since 2011, including the devolution of new powers, the Scottish Government sought to engage with autistic people, their families and carers and those with a professional interest on the development of the strategy's next and final phase.</p> <p>Scottish Strategy for Autism: outcomes and priorities 2018-2021, published in March 2018 set out priorities for action through to 2021 to improve outcomes for autistic people living in Scotland.</p> <p>These priorities attempted to reflect the key issues raised during a short period of engagement with autistic people and their families, practitioners working with autistic people and members of the Scottish Strategy for Autism Governance Group.</p> <p>The Strategy is currently being independently evaluated and will be published alongside a report detailing progress against the strategy's outcomes will be published in Spring 2021.</p>
20.	We will work with schools, local authorities, health and social care partnerships, further and higher education institutions and employers to improve the lives of young disabled people. This includes points of transition into all levels of education – primary,	Scottish Government have continued to fund and work in partnership with Association for Real Change (ARC) Scotland to develop and deliver the 'Principles into Practice' framework trial programme. Local Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships were invited to submit expressions of interest in this trial in October 2020, with a view to it commencing in December 2020. The purpose of the trial is to improve the transitions support available to young people and their parents and carers in the participating trial areas, and to test and bring the draft of Principles

	<p>secondary further and higher – education and employment. We will be mindful of young people who have faced structural inequalities and complex barriers that result in lack of employment. We will ensure that supports are in place so that they can live a life of equal participation, with the support they need. We will embed the Principles of Good Transitions, which have been endorsed by 30 multi-sector organisations in Scotland and prioritise person-centred, coordinated support.</p>	<p>into Practice and associated resources to completion, in order to support its implementation more widely.</p>
21.	<p>We will take forward recommended solutions from the findings of the Complex Care project by March 2018. We will explore alternative solutions to out of area placements and delayed discharge for people with complex care needs. We will involve people with lived experience and their carers.</p>	<p>Following the Complex Care Project, we commissioned the 'Coming Home' report which made a number of recommendations to improve the support for individuals with learning disabilities who have complex needs, and who are either placed out-of-area, or are currently delayed in hospital-based assessment and treatment units. The Scottish Government has agreed a £20 million fund to facilitate the discharge of these patients back to the community, while bringing home people who might have been inappropriately placed in the rest of the UK.</p>
22.	<p>A National Framework for Families with Disabled Children and Young People will be produced and implemented to improve the outcomes of young disabled people and ensure they</p>	<p>In 2016, the Scottish Government funded a survey of families with disabled children and young people across Scotland to gather evidence about their information needs. Families said they would favour a centralised resource which signposts relevant information and organisations. Scottish Government developed an online resource to Support Disabled Children, Young People and their Families which launched in 2019.</p>

	<p>are getting the best provision and support possible. We will work closely with disabled children, young people, their families and the organisations that represent them in the development of the Framework. The timescale and format of the Framework will be informed by an engagement process taking place in early 2017.</p>	<p>The site is rights based and was developed through a process of co-design and co-production. It aims to provide clear, accessible information on national policies, entitlements, rights and the provision of various forms of support which may be available to disabled children, young people and their families. The guides to policies, legislation and service provision are interspersed with examples of real life stories to showcase best practice.</p> <p>We monitor website analytics to ensure there is still interest and visitors to the site.</p>
23.	<p>A local support and information network for parents of disabled children will be piloted from November 2016 to April 2017 and the learning materials for the pilot will be collated to demonstrate a model of parent engagement and participation that can be replicated throughout Scotland</p>	<p>The pilot was carried out over the six months, October 2016 to March 2017, to test out a parent participation approach and create a parent carer forum, with parents and professionals in West Lothian. Signpost and Contact a Family, who are members of the 'For Scotland's Disabled Children' Coalition, worked in partnership to deliver the pilot project.</p> <p>Contact a Family and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) parent advisers and associates provided the training, materials and support to deliver the pilot project. Contact a Family provided a written report at the end of the six months to Scottish Government on the outcomes of the pilot, evidencing the learning from the pilot project that could be replicated with other parent groups and professionals in other local authority areas. Using the learning and doing of the West Lothian Parent Participation Pilot, which brought parents and Local Authority representatives together to test out this approach, they produced a 'Getting Started Guide to Parent Participation: Creating a Parent Carer Forum'</p>
24.	<p>Our refreshed action plan on internet safety will be published by March 2017, which will fully consider the issues affecting disabled children in the online world. In addition to this,</p>	<p>In 2017 the Scottish Government published its National Action Plan on Internet Safety for Children and Young People setting out priorities to support Scotland's children and young people to be resilient, confident and safe in the digital environment, ensuring children have an age appropriate and evolving understanding of the opportunities and risks which exist online as well as supporting parents and carers to better equip young people to navigate their online activity.</p>

	<p>consideration will be given to how we can effectively address the issues affecting disabled adults online.</p>	<p>The regulation of the internet, online services and online service providers in the UK is a reserved matter and we continue to work with the UK Government in the development of a range of legislative and non-legislative measures to keep all users safe online.</p> <p>In Scotland we use our devolved responsibilities for Education, Policing and Child Protection policy to take action in safeguarding and supporting children and young people. A range of Government-supported work continues across Health, Justice, Equalities, Human Rights and Policing to protect children from harm, both online and offline and policy continues to be developed and steered by Scotland's PROMISE foundations, the UNCRC incorporation into Scots Law and through Scotland's GIRFEC approach. In April 2019 the Scottish Government launched a web resource to support Disabled Children, Young People and their Families. The webpage was designed and created following consultation with families across Scotland and the content was designed around information families felt they needed. This resource includes a section on internet safety.</p>
25.	<p>An enhanced learning and development framework for foster carers will support them to develop and enhance skills to care for all children, including disabled children, looked after in foster care.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government commissioned the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to develop a national learning and development framework for foster carers, now known as the Standard for Foster Care. After stakeholder engagement and consultation the SSSC published the final Standard on its website in April 2017. The First Minister commissioned an Independent Care Review which ran for 3 years between Feb 2017 and Feb 2020 which had a focus on the skills of the children's care workforce. Scottish Ministers will be considering options for implementation of the Standard for Foster Care in the context of the Independent Care Review which reported on 5 February 2020 and the establishing of The Promise and its oversight board announced on 4 Feb 2021. Foster carers in some cases need to care for children or young people who have varying disabilities and they need to undertake training and learning to help them meet their individual needs. Any work going forward will be cognisant of this. The final reports of the Review published on 5 Feb 2020: Care Review reports – Independent Care Review and the Standard for Foster Care 2017 - Scottish Social Services Council (sssc.uk.com)</p>

26.	<p>The Student Award Agency Scotland (SAAS) will work in partnership with disabled students and stakeholders to deliver an increasingly accessible application process, including improved advice and guidance, for all students with additional support needs, including disabled students.</p>	<p>The Student Awards Agency Scotland continues to work in partnership with disabled students and stakeholders, to help ensure we deliver user centred and tested, accessible products for all.</p>
27.	<p>From 2017 the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Outcome Agreement guidance will require colleges and universities to produce an Access and Inclusion Strategy that defines their inclusive practices and the impact this has on learners. As part of this work, SFC expect colleges to evidence how they use funds to support students with educational support needs, including disabled students, to ensure they have an equal chance of successfully completing their programme of study. This approach will gather outcomes by type of disability which will enable SFC to directly target interventions if required.</p>	<p>All colleges have an access and inclusion strategy in place. These have been reviewed and presented to the Outcomes for Disabled Students Group . This group is co-hosted by the SFC and Lead Scotland and is chaired by the CEO of Lead Scotland. Its membership includes disabled students, parent representation, NUS Scotland and the sector. The group also includes Scottish Government representation including representation relating to the student support review and the A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: employment action plan. Good progress was noted, in relation to disabled students, in both Outcome Agreements and the associated access and inclusion strategies for the college sector.</p>

Ambition 2: Decent incomes and fairer working lives		
28.	<p>We will reduce barriers to employment for disabled people and seek to reduce by at least half, the employment gap between disabled people and the rest of the working age population. Together with disabled people, their organisations and other key stakeholders we will develop this action in more detail, including a timetable and plan for achieving the reduction.</p>	<p>In December 2018 when we published A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan we committed to at least halving the disability employment gap (the difference between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people) by 2038. The latest full year data shows the disability employment gap was 32.6 percentage points (ONS Jan-Dec 2019), having reduced by 4.8 percentage points since our baseline year (2016).</p> <p>In March 2021 the Scottish Government published the second annual progress report.</p> <p>Progress includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the Scottish Government’s workplace adjustments pilot, as part of the implementation of its Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People; • Continued development of mental health guidance and support to better equip employers to offer appropriate support to employees; • Establishing the Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum; • Scottish Government’s Children and Families Directorate partnering with ARC Scotland to trial the Principles into Practice programme; • Increased applications to the Independent Living Fund (ILF) Scotland Transitions Fund, with additional funding awarded in 2020; • Establishing a Public Social Partnership, which is led by the Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE) to address the barriers that employers face in hiring and retaining disabled people; • Investing in the Workplace Equality Fund, which supports projects focussed on embedding fair work practices in the workplace for disabled people and other equality groups (e.g. women and ethnic minority workers); and • After engagement with Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) and disabled parents to help inform delivery, we are investing a further £5 million of Tackling Child Poverty funding into the Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF) to support disabled parents. This funding boost focusses on supporting unemployed

		<p>disabled parents in households impacted by child poverty to move closer to and into employment thereby delivering on our original commitment to invest up to £6 million to provide support for this priority group.</p> <p>We recognise that COVID-19 is already having a huge public health and economic impact in Scotland, and that the longer term impact on employment opportunities of disabled people in particular is likely to be impacted. The Scottish Government remains committed to addressing inequalities in the labour market and is taking action to try to minimise any negative impact on disabled people as a result of the pandemic. This includes working with SG colleagues and wider partners to ensure young disabled people are supported to benefit from the Young Person's Guarantee as part of our wider recovery efforts.</p>
29.	<p>Disabled people are 20% of the population, but make up only 11% of the private sector workforce and 11.7% of the public sector workforce. (Source: Annual Population Survey (APS) ONS). We will consult with DPOs and public sector bodies around setting targets to redress this imbalance.</p>	<p>As part of our commitments in the Disability Action Plan we consulted during the summer 2018 with Disabled People's Organisations, public sector bodies and individuals around setting targets for disability employment. The response to the consultation was published in April 2019. In the response to the consultation the SG committed to publishing a SG Disability Recruitment and Retention Plan, setting out next steps going forward. This was published in August 2019. The Recruitment and Retention Plan sets a target for the SG workforce so that by 2025, 25% of all new external recruits are disabled people, and that we represent the Scottish population also by 2025. It also focusses on workplace adjustments and improved recruitment and retention practices within the SG in the first instance.</p>
30.	<p>We will pilot a work experience scheme specifically for young disabled people aimed at improving their transition into permanent employment and removing barriers they can face finding employment.</p>	<p>Due to COVID-19, the work experience scheme could not be piloted as Developing the Youth Workforce (DYW) representatives were unable to gain access to schools. However, we are continuing to engage with schools virtually through DYW Regional Groups to provide support for young people. We are also funding Equalities training to School Coordinators that will allow them to support young people to more effectively engage with disabled young people. We have provided funding to ENABLE Scotland to support their work to create an equal society for every person who has a learning disability. Enable are providing a programme that will tailor support to young disabled people and provide them with focused and tailored career advice and work experience opportunities, to help them to develop and realise their</p>

		potential. The Stepping Up Project will connect disabled young people to fair work, education and productive activities designed to ensure a successful transition into adult life and work.
31.	We recognise the success already achieved by Project SEARCH in enabling young people with learning disabilities and autism to secure sustainable employment. We will explore opportunities to promote the Project SEARCH model as we develop plans for greater alignment of learning and skills provision.	We continue to work with Project SEARCH and other supported employment models to help ensure young people with additional support needs are provided with opportunities for work-related learning, and to find fair and sustainable work. The work of Project SEARCH is highlighted to partners, including at a local level, with a number of local authorities supporting programmes in their area. We have recently initiated a review of supported employment, for which Project SEARCH are members of the steering group, and will have the opportunity to share best practice, and identify critical success factors in supporting young people with learning disabilities and autism to secure employment. This includes ensuring they are able to access additional equipment or adaptations where this may facilitate their journey into work. Scottish participants of Project SEARCH have, for a long time, been unable to apply for Access to Work. However, after engaging with colleagues in the Department for Work and Pensions, the Scottish Government has secured agreement that participants of Project SEARCH can now apply and benefit from Access to Work (where relevant criteria are met).
32.	We will actively promote the Department for Work and Pensions' Access to Work scheme to employers and disabled people to ensure a higher uptake and use of the scheme in Scotland. This includes, for example Fit for Work Scotland and Healthy Working Lives, as well as to other partners including organisations supporting disabled people. For devolved	<p>We have actively promoted the Access to Work programme in partnership with our Disabled People's Organisation Disability Employment Stakeholder Group. Together we have worked to raise awareness of the Access to Work programme among disabled people, employability providers, and employers – including by highlighting the breadth of support that Access to Work can provide.</p> <p>A Scottish Access to Work Stakeholder Forum was launched in Oct 2020 meaning that, for the first time, disabled people in Scotland have a formal mechanism through which to help shape the delivery of Access to Work in Scotland. The Forum's purpose is to represent the views of service users, offering advice to DWP on how Access to Work could be enhanced to improve customer experience. It will also provide input, where relevant, on policy development and explore further opportunities to raise awareness of this valuable support in Scotland.</p>

	<p>services from 2017, providers will be required to ensure that disabled people are supported to claim and receive the Access to Work funding they are entitled to so that they can sustain employment.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government has also worked with DWP officials to clarify the guidance for advisors on support available to disabled people undertaking work experience and work trials.</p>
33.	<p>When people become disabled or develop health conditions while in employment, early action may help them sustain work. We want to improve the support that disabled people and people with health conditions in Scotland can access to help them stay in, or return quickly to, fair work. As part of this, we will explore innovative ways of integrating health, disability and employment support in Scotland, to ensure that people can find their way quickly to the tailored, person centred support they need.</p>	<p>The Health & Work Support pilot was delivered in collaboration with the Dundee and Fife Health and Social Care Partnerships. Funded by the Department for Work and Pensions the pilot aimed to integrate health and work support in Dundee and Fife.</p> <p>Within Dundee and Fife the pilot aimed to provide early support to people with a health condition or disability, to help them maintain or secure employment. It was available for people who were in work; in work but absent due to illness; and people who had been unemployed for less than six months. In addition to providing this support the pilot also offered advice and training to employers for issues related to health and work. Through a single point of contact (telephone or via a website) it offered a range of advice, training and specialist health support. Delivered by clinical experts, services included case management, physiotherapy and psychological therapies; and occupational therapy.</p> <p>The pilot was due to run until June 2020, however, it closed slightly earlier than expected to allow for operational staff to respond to Covid-19. An interim evaluation of the pilot was published in March 2020. It is anticipated that the final evaluation will be published in 2021. With a view that the findings of the final evaluation will inform future national work regarding the integration of health and work services..</p>
34.	<p>We will improve the employment prospects of disabled people, through newly devolved Scottish employability programmes. In April 2017 we will introduce a one year transitional service for</p>	<p>Fair Start Scotland (FSS) started in April 2018 with an initial 3 year referral period. In July 2020, we extended the delivery of FSS services with the current contractors up to 31 March 2023. Scotland's Devolved Employment Statistical Summaries are published quarterly and the most recent performance data published covers up to December 2020 and demonstrates that:</p>

<p>disabled people to provide continuity of service for those who need it most. Called 'Work First Scotland', it will deliver employment support for up to 3,300 disabled people. From April 2018, a new devolved programme will take a voluntary and person-led approach to ensure that disabled people are offered support which is appropriate and built upon guaranteed service expectations from providers. Disabled people engaging with the programme will receive high-quality pre-employment support which identifies and develops their strengths and assets while focusing on sustainable employment outcomes. Through the commissioning of this programme in 2017, we will ensure that appropriate specialist provision is in place to deliver these ambitions.</p>	<p>a) Over 29,000 people to date have started on the service, including 12,929 people with a disability. b) Over 9000 participants have moved into employment, including 3584 people with a disability. c) 72% of people starting work went on to sustain employment for three months, 79% of those who sustained employment for three months went on to reach at least six months, and 77% of those who sustained employment for six months went on to reach at least 12 months</p> <p>The findings from the FSS Evaluation Report published in November 2020 also demonstrate that the service has matured over its second year of delivery; that local relationships have been well established and enhanced, that participants value the support provided and that over 9 in 10 participants felt they were treated with dignity and respect.</p> <p>Of those who joined FSS during the last two and three quarter years, just under half (44%) of people receiving FSS reported having a disability. The proportion of disabled participants decreased from year 1 to year 2: from 55% to 44%, and decreased further during the COVID-19 pandemic to 27% in April – June 2020. However in October – December 2020 the proportion of disabled people was 44%, similar to pre-pandemic levels. The pandemic and restrictions on face-to-face meetings have had a significant impact on FSS service delivery, as people with health concerns have been less likely to engage with services during this time.. Recent statistics show that compared to all FSS participants, a lower proportion of disabled people, people who are limited “a lot” by a long term health condition and older people (aged 50 years and over) went on to start work after joining FSS. To address this, we are focusing our continuous improvement activity over the coming year on working with service providers to extend their reach to and delivery for disabled people, minority ethnic communities and other groups as directed by our evaluation feedback and performance data.</p>
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35.	<p>Disabled young people will be supported through the Developing the Young Workforce Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy. In partnership with local authorities, colleges, employers and Skills Development Scotland, the focus of the Strategy will be on removing barriers to open up the range of opportunities for young people and prepare them for employment are aligned with labour market opportunities.</p>	<p>To advance equality through the education system, schools are embedding equality within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). This is being progressed through a clear communication of career options, with significant involvement from employers and colleges. This work is actively targeting equality groups to promote diverse participation across gender, ethnicity, young people with disabilities and care leavers.</p> <p>Current statistics for the DYW programme's Key Performance Indicator 10: "Increase the employment rate for young disabled people to the population average by 2021", shows that the employment rate for young disabled increased from 35.8% in January – December 2018 to 42% for the same period in 2019 (the latest data available). This is an increase of 6.8 percentage points compared to the baseline figure of 35.2% (January - December 2014).</p>
36.	<p>We will remove the barriers that have previously prevented young disabled people entering Modern Apprenticeships (MA), through the implementation of The Equalities Action Plan for Modern Apprenticeships in</p>	<p>Skills Development Scotland (SDS) published its Apprenticeship Equality Action Plan (EAP) Year 4 update in November 2020.</p> <p>The proportion of MA starts in 2019/20 self-identifying an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty is 15.4% (4,220), which is 1.3 percentage points higher than last year. Last year, 3,771 MA starts self-identified an impairment, health condition or learning difficulty.</p>

	Scotland. The five-year plan includes specific improvement targets for MA participation by disabled people, including part-time and flexible engagement, to be achieved by 2021 and Skills Development Scotland will report on these annually.	
37.	Effective immediately, we will provide young disabled people with the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship funding for their chosen MA Framework until the age of 30.	The enhanced contribution rates providing those with a disability or experience of care with the highest level of Modern Apprenticeship funding for their chosen Frameworks up to the age of 29 was launched April 2017. Enhanced funding for MAs continues to be offered up to the age of 29 for disabled and care experienced young people. This recognises that these young people often enter the labour market later than their peers. In 2019/20, 1,547 individuals were supported by this funding. In 2019/20, following consultation with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) contracted training providers worked with Scottish Government, to simplify the eligibility criteria and process for claiming Enhanced Funding for 2020/21. SDS intend to undertake comprehensive review of the impact of the funding at the end of this financial year.
38.	For the first time, from April 2017, Scottish public authorities will publish information on equal pay policy and occupational segregation for disabled people as part of the public sector equality duty.	Scottish public authorities continue to publish information on equal pay policy and occupational segregation for disabled people as part of the public sector equality duty. The next report is due in April 2021.
39.	Building on a pilot programme being delivered by SCVO and Inclusion Scotland in 2016-17, we will deliver a disability internship programme, providing disabled people with 120	The total number of internships delivered to date is 102, with new placements still in development. Covid-19 slowed down the number of available placements in the last year of the programme, but more recently these have picked up significantly as employers began embracing remote working – which can be more suitable for many disabled people. To date, where information has been returned, there is a 68% success rate for interns going from “under or unemployed” into permanent paid

	employment opportunities in the third and public sectors and in politics, over the period 2017-2021.	employment in fitting with their career aspirations. A further 20% chose to pursue further education, with only 12% remaining unemployed. For the years for which finalised diversity stats have been collated (Year 1 and 2), the gender split for interns was 65% women, 25% men and 10% non-binary.
40.	A two-year NHS internship programme for disabled graduates will be delivered in partnership with NHSScotland and the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living Equality Academy from 2016-2018. We are undertaking ongoing evaluation with disabled people to develop options for the longer term.	Since 2016, the Scottish Government has run an internship for disabled people to work in the NHS. Between 2016 and 2018 40 disabled graduates were employed by the NHS. 97% of participants went on to a positive outcome or work or higher education and 55% progressed into the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland.
41.	A Learning Disability Employment Programme will be delivered by NHSScotland in 2017 with tools and guidance to support Health Boards to increase the number of people with learning disabilities employed by them.	We are continuing to support Boards to increase the number of people employed with learning disabilities. This includes reviewing annually the number of Boards that are participating in the Project SEARCH employment programme, and supporting SG Disability Team with next steps on Project SEARCH proposals. We will annually review the contents of the Learning Disability Toolkit to ensure that the links are up to date, and review periodically with our Equality and Diversity Leads to ensure it is fit for purpose.
42.	The Scottish Business Pledge and other employer networks will be used to raise awareness of the skills and capacity of the disabled workforce and their positive impact on company productivity and profitability.	The refreshed Business Pledge was launched on 10 October 2019. Key changes are focused on its elements and structure. We have worked closely with colleagues to ensure that disability and appropriate support and guidance is clear on the new Business Pledge Website. We will be holding a specific learning event focusing on the Skilled and Diverse Workforce element in 2020 which will provide another opportunity to build wider awareness and develop an understanding on disability. The Business Leadership Group has now been established and is chaired by Caroline Colliston who is a partner at DWF. the Covid pandemic has impacted on

		our ability to deliver Business to Business (B2B) sessions due to other pressures on business employers and the restrictions around face to face engagement. A revised programme of B2B engagement as part of the wider Business Pledge learning network will be developed in 2021.
43.	We will continue to promote the Supported Employment Framework and model for disabled people to learn on the job with support from colleagues and a job coach. We will require providers of future employment services to offer a diverse menu of options including supported employment.	Our Annual Progress Report for A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan published in March 2020 highlights the work carried out so far in support of at least halve the Disability Employment Gap, as well as confirming Scottish Government's commitment to undertake a review of Supported Employment to ensure that we are delivering the best pre and in-work support to those who need it most. The review is expected to be commissioned in the first quarter of 2021, and final report due in the summer of 2021.
44.	We are backing supported businesses to increase their sustainability particularly through procurement, coordinated business support, and business engagement. Scottish Government (SG) and our enterprise agencies will be working with supported businesses in identifying areas of support that could be accessed to help them flourish and become more sustainable.	The Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 (the 2014 Act) contains a number of provisions relating to supported businesses. These provisions mean that a contracting authority will be required to: Maintain, and make publicly available, a contracts register containing information on any contracts entered into as a result of a regulated procurement; set out in its procurement strategy how it intends to ensure that its regulated procurements will be carried out in compliance with the general duties and the sustainable procurement duty (including a requirement to consider how it can facilitate involvement of small and medium enterprises, third sector bodies and supported businesses in the procurement process); and include within its annual procurement report a summary of regulated procurements it expects to commence in the next two financial years (which will help drive greater transparency and local accountability). A multi-lot, multi-supplier framework for the provision of commodities reserved for supported businesses provides Scottish public bodies with a route to market for a range of goods and services which can be provided by Supported Businesses commenced on 10 December 2018. The framework has successfully run for an initial two year period, with the option of two separate one year extension periods. The first extension period has been taken up at the authority's discretion, extending

		the framework until 09 December 2021, with an option for a further separate and final one year extension period, following a detailed stakeholder consultation process.
45.	Social enterprise demonstrates a more inclusive way of doing business, by promoting equality and tackling discrimination. In December 2016, we will publish a 10-year Social Enterprise Strategy which will raise this ambition even higher, providing a framework for action planning in 2017. In the first of these action plans we will agree measures to stimulate pre-start activity, increasing the number of disabled social entrepreneurs, and explore creative ways to enable Scotland's social enterprises to employ more disabled people, including the use of targeted wage incentives.	We published Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy on 14 December 2016, which is a ten-year strategy, fully coproduced with the social enterprise sector. We then published the first of three social enterprise action plans on 12 April 2017, entitled 'Building a Sustainable Social Enterprise Sector in Scotland: 2017 – 2020'. This plan identified 92 individual actions, including "working with equality organisations (e.g. Disabled People's Organisations) to support nascent social enterprise activity" and "transforming the potential of supported businesses". Officials worked collaboratively with the sector in order to identify and support projects and programmes which realised our shared strategic priorities, by delivering on the 92 individual actions identified by the plan. Discussions have been had with relevant stakeholders, including Inclusion Scotland. The second three year Action Plan was due to launch in April 2020, however, this has been delayed due to Covid -19. This delay has provided the opportunity to reconsider the Action Plan, and re-draft, in co-production with drafting partners, and look to launch in early 2021.
46.	We will stimulate more inclusive pre-start activity for social enterprise and work with partners to increase the number of disabled people establishing micro and social enterprises.	The Scottish Government has continued to provide support to our partners, to work toward increasing social enterprise start up, through support such as the Social Entrepreneurs Fund, which provides financial support to individuals with a social business idea. A breakdown of support, provided by the Social Entrepreneurs Fund, for disabled people, between 2017 and 2020, can be found in the following breakdown-

		Year	Number of disabled applicants (declared)	Percentage of total awards
		2017-18	8 out of 99 awards	8%
		2018-19	17 out of 102 awards	16%
		2019-20	15 out of 106 awards	14%
		2020-21	12 out of 67 awards	17%
		<p>The 2019 census also established that there had been an increase, between 2017 and 2019, from 15% to 16%, of social enterprises led by a disabled person at management level, and from 9% to 11%, of social enterprises with a disabled person sitting on the Board of the social enterprise. The second Scottish Social Enterprise Action Plan will be published shortly, in it the Scottish Government will continue to promote the inclusive pre-start activity for social enterprise and work with partners to increase the number of disabled people establishing micro and social enterprises.</p>		
47.	<p>We will provide funding during the current parliamentary session to enable more disabled people to volunteer and increase the numbers of disabled people taking up volunteering opportunities. In most cases, taking up a volunteering opportunity will not have an impact on disabled people's entitlements to benefits but we will work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and key stakeholders to ensure that this is better understood by disabled people and others.</p>	<p>In June 2017, the Scottish Government announced funding of £3.8 m over four years to support the Volunteer Support Grant, which provides funding to local third sector organisations to enable them to build capacity to engage with volunteers facing barriers to participating, including disabled people. We currently provide funding for the Volunteering Support Fund, which is worth £1.1 million per annum for 2018-21 which focuses on recruiting volunteers who experience disadvantage or barriers to volunteering.</p> <p>Updated DWP guidance was co-designed in Scotland with people volunteering and claiming benefits and was published by the DWP in Scotland in 2017. It was then published on GOV.UK for claimants across the four nations in 2019.</p> <p>The 2019-20 Programme for Government highlighted our commitment to developing a Volunteering delivery plan aligned to the 5 outcomes of the National Volunteering for All Framework, including "there are diverse, quality and inclusive opportunities for everyone to get involved and stay involved". Building on the discussions and insights generated as part of the work on the Social Renewal Advisory Board, the delivery plan will be co-produced and take into account what we have experienced and learned from the response to the pandemic, as well as addressing how to</p>		

		remove barriers to volunteering. Our commitment to equality and inclusion will be embedded in the development of the plan.
48.	The 'Carer Positive' scheme complements the Fair Work agenda by encouraging organisations in Scotland to have fair and flexible working practices for employees who are also unpaid carers, and to help ensure that carers can return to and remain in work alongside their caring role. We will increase the use of Carer Positive so that more employers sign up to the scheme.	The Carer Positive employer accreditation scheme encourages organisations in Scotland to have fair and flexible working practices for employees to help ensure that carers can return to and remain in work alongside their caring role. We continue to fund Carer Positive to increase the uptake of the scheme so that more employees in Scotland work for Carer Positive employers. We have supported Carers Scotland who run the scheme to move to providing increased remote support for employers during the pandemic. As of February 2021, 207 employers have been assessed as Carer Positive, including 50 employers at the higher 'exemplary' or 'established' levels. The total number of employees working for Carer Positive organisations in Scotland has now reached 449,000. This has increased from 68 employers with 249,000 employees in December 2016.
49.	We will hold a major congress on disability, employment and the workplace and will engage with partners, employers, the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) and Disabled People's Organisations during 2017 in shaping its focus.	We held a major congress on disability, employment and the workplace on 30 April 2018 in Glasgow. DPOs, the STUC and employers were involved in the Congress and the findings helped inform the A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan .
50.	With our new powers we will establish a social security system that treats people with dignity and respect while applying for, being assessed for, and receiving disability benefits.	Social Security Scotland was established in 2018 and our Social Security Charter states that our Agency will treat people with dignity, fairness and respect. Continued engagement with stakeholders and clients through User Research and Stakeholder Reference working groups such as the Disability and Carers Benefits Expert Advisory Group have helped to shape the development of our services,

	All of the engagement the Scottish social security system has with those applying for benefits will embody this approach, including communications, accessibility and in appealing decisions.	particularly in terms of accessibility and ensuring we undertake a person-centred approach.
51.	We will introduce a Social Security Bill during the first year of this Parliament, laying the foundations for a Scottish social security system that treats people with disabilities with dignity and respect.	The Social Security Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament in June 2017, was passed unanimously in April 2018, and received Royal Assent in June 2018 to become the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018. The Scottish Government legally assumed responsibility for disability benefits in April 2020. Due to the impact of Covid-19, existing disability benefits continue to be delivered by DWP on our behalf through an agency agreement.
52.	We will maintain disability benefits and ensure they are not means tested.	We have committed to protecting disability assistance by ensuring that it will be non-means tested. We have identified a number of areas that can be redesigned so that they better meet the needs of individuals. We are co-designing these, and the end to end process from application to award, with people with experience of the current system. This includes replacing assessments with client consultations. Child Disability Payment will be delivered by autumn 2021 and Adult Disability Payment will be delivered by summer 2022.
53.	We will provide information in a range of accessible formats to help people understand the system to guarantee that disabled people are not disadvantaged by communication barriers	Further information can be found here: Social Security Scotland - Benefits Our commitment to a person-centred approach ensures that delivery of social security benefits will be as inclusive and accessible as possible. We continue to work alongside Stakeholder Reference Group and the Disability and Carers Benefits Expert Advisory Group to ensure inclusive communication is utilised in all applications and our services.

54.	We will set up Social Security Experience Panels to involve at least 2,000 people who have recent experience of receiving benefits to help to design and test the new system to ensure it works for them. When we set out our guiding principles for social security, we said that we would put the user experience first, and that our system would be designed with and for the people of Scotland. We are committed to making the Experience Panels accessible, giving as many people as possible the opportunity to take part.	More than 2,400 people registered as panel members when we launched in 2017. The work of the Experience Panels continues apace, with projects this year informing a wide range of design decisions. This has included various aspects of disability benefits including the names of the benefits, as well as cross-cutting processes and policies such as the transfer of cases from DWP to Social Security Scotland. We have now published both Our Charter for Social Security Scotland, and a charter monitoring framework, both of which were co-designed with Experience Panel members. We continue to offer flexible ways of participating for all panel members, including the nearly 1900 panel members who have told us they have experience of disability benefits. This year we have reopened recruitment to top up membership and boost some targeted groups.
55.	A Disability and Carers Benefits Expert Advisory Group will be set up to provide recommendations and guidance on aspects of assessments including how often they should be. It will also look at eligibility criteria, as well as longer-term and lifetime awards.	The Disability and Carers Benefit Advisory Group was established in April 2017. The Group has advised on several issues including the Agency, the Charter, Carer's Allowance Supplement, Equalities Analysis, and on aspects of assessments. We continue to work closely with the Group to ensure a transparent, inclusive and accessible service design.
56.	We are committed to using our new powers under the Scotland Act to effectively abolish the bedroom tax, and in the interim we will continue to provide funding to fully mitigate its	We continue to mitigate the bedroom tax using discretionary housing payments, but have been unable to progress the fix through Universal Credit (UC) due to a lack of capacity in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to take this forward. At this time it is not known when DWP will be able to deliver. Roll out of UC makes ongoing approach increasingly administratively difficult for councils. We are engaging with DWP on an ongoing basis.

	impact; supporting over 70,000 households, an estimated 80% of which contain at least one disabled adult.	
57.	We will extend winter fuel payments to families with severely disabled children by 2020.	We have delivered Child Winter Heating Assistance to 14,000 severely disabled children and young people on the highest rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance in Winter 2020. This has provided £200 to each eligible child or young person, to help reduce the financial pressures faced by families caused by winter heating costs throughout the day and at night. We are the only part of the UK to do this, and Social Security Scotland has made payments with a total value of £2.7 million.
58.	We will increase Carer's Allowance so that it is paid at the same level as Jobseeker's Allowance, an 18% increase which will see eligible carers receive around £600 more each year.	Since launch in September 2018, 401,575 Carer's Allowance Supplement payments totalling £108.8 million have been made to 105,795 carers. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact on both carers and carer services, around 80,000 eligible carers received an extra one-off special payment of £230.10 Coronavirus Carer's Allowance Supplement payment alongside the regular Carer's Allowance Supplement payment of £230.10 in June 2020. Through Carer's Allowance Supplement and this special payment, carers in Scotland will receive £690.30 more than carers south of the border in 2020/21. This is an extra investment of £19.2 million, bringing our total investment to almost £350 million in 2020/21.
59.	We will increase Carer's Allowance for those looking after more than one disabled child and we are working with carers and carer organisations to consider a change to the eligibility criteria for Carer's Allowance to better meet the needs and aspirations of Scottish carers.	Delivery of the additional payment for carers of more than one disabled child and the Scottish replacement benefit for Carer's Allowance have been affected by the coronavirus impacts on the social security programme. Timings are being considered as part of work on revising the overall timetable and will be announced once this is complete.

60.	We are working with young carers' organisations to consider the introduction of a Young Carer's Allowance as part of a package to provide extra support for young people with significant caring responsibilities	Young Carer Grant is now a payment of £305.10, a figure which is up-rated annually. Between launch in October 2019 and 31 July 2020 almost £500,000 has been invested into supporting the young carers of Scotland. In response to coronavirus, the rules about the timing of applications have been relaxed so that if a young carer applies after their 19th birthday, their application can be treated as though it were on time, if they were delayed in applying due to coronavirus. These changes will be in force from April 2020 to March 2021 and may be extended.
61.	We will continue to invest in the Family Fund to provide direct grants to low income families with severely disabled children to assist with a wide range of needs from essential support equipment, to computers, white goods and family breaks.	<p>From 1st April 2017 to 31 March 2021 inclusive, the Scottish Government has provided the Family Fund with £12, 545, 000 to deliver grants to families on low incomes raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people for items they might otherwise not afford, including IT and white goods. The total number of grants provided to families from 1st April 2017 to 31 March 2021 is predicted to be around 26, 265.</p> <p>The 'Take a Break Fund Scotland' is also funded by the Scottish Government. Take a Break provides unpaid carers of disabled or seriously ill children and their families, with choice and opportunity to access a single or ongoing breaks from their caring routine. Grants are paid directly to families, are on average £300 and can be used for a break away, towards leisure activities, outings, sports equipment and other opportunities to provide a break. From 2017 to 2021 the Fund has provided £2,978,750 to 8,877 carers and families.</p>
Ambition 3: Places that are accessible to everyone		
62.	We will work with local authorities, disabled people, and other stakeholders to ensure that each local authority sets a realistic target within its Local Housing Strategy for the delivery of wheelchair accessible	The guidance on the wheelchair accessible housing target was issued 2019. The requirements for local authorities to set targets across all tenures and report annually are in place.

	housing across all tenures and reports annually on progress	
63.	We will ensure that the grant subsidy arrangements for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme do not prevent specialist housing identified by local authorities as a priority from being built.	This is an ongoing commitment that Ministers continue to prioritise and promote. This flexibility always been available so that grant subsidy can be varied to allow social landlords to build specialised housing identified as a priority within local authority plans.
64.	Research, involving wheelchair users and homebuilders, into creating tailor-made wheelchair accessible homes from mass-market new homes will identify issues and costs surrounding such interventions.	Short life Expert Working Group produced report in 2019. This is being considered as part of Housing to 2040 development work. A Housing to 2040 publication anticipated in early 2021. Creating Opportunities For Home Ownership For Wheelchair Users and their families Architecture project by Anderson Bell + Christie
65.	We will work with health and social care partnerships, disabled people, local authorities and the housing sector to develop guidance for housing and care providers on timescales for installing adaptations. We will begin this work in 2017	We are continuing to work with housing and care providers to share best practice and intend to use these examples when reviewing policy on adaptations. The Programme for Government 2020 included a commitment to review the adaptations system looking to assess its suitability in terms of efficiency and resourcing. This commitment will also link to Housing to 2040
66.	Through our Accessible Travel Framework, developed with disabled people and transport providers, we will:	The Accessible Travel Framework published in 2016 has been making steady progress in relation to its 4 outcomes agreed by disabled people. A move to an Annual Delivery plan was published in summer 2019 and set out our 8 priority areas.

<p>Develop our Accessible Travel Hub – accessibletravel.scot – that aims to draw together up-to-date information about all aspects of transport accessibility in a one-stop-shop so that everyone can learn from good practice, make connections and share their work.</p> <p>Scope requirements for training with disabled people and transport providers/operators covering awareness of hidden impairments and ways of communicating, including basic BSL phrases.</p> <p>Explore ways of making disabled people more aware about how they can influence decision-making in transport.</p> <p>Specify and agree common standards of service for disabled people if their public transport journeys are disrupted</p> <p>Produce information about bus layout designs which improve accessibility, identifying specific changes and how they benefit people with different impairments.</p> <p>Develop a comprehensive source of accessible information</p>	<p>Due to Covid-19 work on the Accessible Framework was paused, however a Progress Report (including easy read version) was published in January 2021 showing progress on the 2019-2020 Delivery Plan and actions taken to support disabled people as a result of the pandemic. Accessible Travel Delivery Plan: Progress Report - 2019/2020 (transport.gov.scot)</p>
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	<p>about purchasing tickets for a multi-modal journey, including pricing and concessions.</p> <p>Research the current content of transport providers' customer surveys and co-produce a set of standards for surveys and other feedback mechanisms, like mystery shopping.</p>	
67.	<p>We will publish a consultation on improving parking before the end of 2016 which will invite views from disabled people and others on how we can improve the laws on parking to restrict people parking on pavements at dropped kerbs and double parking. A Bill and supporting guidance paper will follow setting out how local authorities implement and enforce parking, including disabled parking spaces, across Scotland.</p>	<p>The consultation document Improving Parking in Scotland was published in 2016, with measures that were included in the Transport Bill introduced in 2018 and received Royal Assent in 2019. The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 includes a number of parking provisions, including a ban on pavement parking, double parking and parking at dropped kerbs.</p> <p>Work on implementing the parking regulations and guidance in support of the 2019 Act was paused owing to resource pressures in local and central Government dealing with the pandemic. Work has recommenced on the implementation and officials have been engaging with stakeholders on the development of the regulations and supporting guidance related to the Act.</p>
68.	<p>A new help guide from VisitScotland giving practical advice to businesses and setting out key accessibility hints and tips will meet the needs of disabled people attending events.</p>	<p>A guide for event organisers to help them create inclusive and accessible events was launched in May 2016 and made available online. Using the content of the guide as a prompt a 'Creating Inclusive Events' workshop was included in the EventScotland National Event Conference in November 2017 where over 80 delegates attended. A Presentation was also given to Edinburgh Event society members in June 2018, using tips contained within the guide on how to make events accessible. The guide was also used to inform the delivery and execution of accessible services for the Solheim Cup 2019.</p>

69.	Scotland's heritage is an important part of our identity, and disabled people should have equal access to it. We will improve physical and online access to the historic environment and collections by 2019 so that more disabled people can enjoy their heritage.	Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is committed to developing and promoting inclusive access for all to the historic environment. In July 2019, HES updated its Access Guide which gives access-related information for 80 of its sites. Most of the sites in the guide are accessible, although the special character of individual location, site geography, architecture and local environment can bring limitations in some circumstances. In March 2020, HES published its British Sign Language (BSL) Plan 2020-24 which sets out its ambitions in relation to communication and engagement with the Deaf BSL users and the Deaf community. HES aims to enhance accessibility for BSL visitors and employees, and contribute to addressing social isolation within the Deaf community.
70.	Creative Scotland's future plans, and revised Equalities Outcomes – to be published in April 2017 – will be informed by their review of equality, diversity and inclusion in the arts, screen and creative industries.	Creative Scotland's Equalities Outcomes ensure funding reflects the diversity of Scotland's population; ensure opportunities to engage in the arts, screen and creative industries are inclusive and accessible; employment patterns are fair and socially inclusive; and Creative Scotland staff have a commitment to mainstream equalities, diversity and inclusion. These outcomes were informed by a review of equality, diversity and inclusion in the arts, screen and creative industries.
71.	We will ensure barriers to accessing and participating in Scotland's culture are broken down. The new Cultural Strategy will be owned by the people of Scotland and will be co-created with practitioners and cultural delivery bodies across the sector.	The Culture Strategy for Scotland was published in February 2020. It recognises Scottish Government support for equal opportunities, which includes ensuring disabled people can lead the cultural life of their choice with all aspects of cultural engagement – formal and informal – available to them. Tackling barriers to participation must be a priority for the culture sector in Scotland. This commitment is complemented by the work of the National Partnership for Culture which provides advice to Ministers on the realisation of the aims and ambitions of the Culture Strategy.
72.	Disabled people's participation at all levels of sport and physical activity will increase through an action plan developed in partnership with disabled people	We refocused with sportscotland around the action of holding The Equality in Physical Activity and Sport Forum by 2019. We agreed that sportscotland's investment in over 50 Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGB's) that they continue to work in partnership to support SGB's to progress against the Equality Standard for Sport and implement the action plans that are developed through this.

	through a new Equality in Physical Activity and Sport Forum by 2019.	Many of these organisations develop and deliver specific programmes that support disabled participants to take part in sport at their chosen level.
73.	sportscotland will invest in disabled people and athletes and ensure that the needs of disabled people and athletes are addressed through investment to Scottish Disability Sport, Active Schools Network, the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics and Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.	<p>Since 2016-17 sportscotland has invested £3,026,700 in Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), the coordinating body for all sports for people of all ages and abilities with a physical, sensory and learning disability. This investment supports SDS to build an effective organisation, develop disability sport at all levels, and support athletes on the world stage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sportscotland invests £12m per year in local authorities to deliver Active Schools, which includes ASN Schools, and works in partnership with all 32 local authorities to provide more and higher quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school, and to develop effective pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community. • The sportscotland institute of sport provides high performance expertise to sports and athletes in Scotland through a range of performance impacting services. In 2017, the Institute created the Para Initiative to improve opportunities for para athletes and enable more para athletes to progress in performance sport. In 2018, the institute delivered services to 49 para athletes from 13 sports. • In recent years, Scottish athletes continued to achieve success on the world stage. Seven of the 17 athletes selected for the Paralympics GB 2018 Winter Paralympic Team were Scottish. 18 para-athletes competed for Team Scotland at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, winning three medals, making it the most successful ever away Commonwealth Games.
74.	A new parasport facility for Scotland in Inverclyde, with an investment of £6 million, is being built to promote the inclusion of disabled athletes in sport. All building work will be completed	In August 2017, sportscotland opened the £12 million redeveloped national training centre Inverclyde. Inverclyde is a residential sports training centre designed with inclusivity in mind for users at all levels, both with and without disabilities. It has improved Scotland's support for disabled athletes in their preparations and helped ensure sport and physical activity is accessible. The design ensures that athletes

	by the end of March 2017. Scottish Disability Sport are now working with 31 governing bodies and local authorities across Scotland to improve access to sporting facilities for all disabled people.	and users of all abilities can make use of the national centre benefiting from the same experience.
75.	We will deliver a workshop with Local Action Groups through the Scottish Rural Network to develop and stimulate new ideas for improving the life chances of disabled people in rural areas.	<p>This action has not been completed however on February 26th, 2021, Scottish Government published 'Inclusive Participation in Rural Scotland: A Preliminary Exploration'. This report outlines the barriers to participation in rural decision making experienced by four communities of interest, including people with disabilities.</p> <p>The report highlights the ways in which the challenges of rurality may compound challenges faced by minority groups in terms of representation and social inclusion. It recommends that policy explores the options for to support these groups in an ongoing capacity."</p>
Ambition 4: Protected rights		
76.	Fees for employment tribunals will be abolished, when we are clear on how the transfer of powers and responsibilities will work. We will consult with disabled people and other equality groups to identify the particular barriers that they face when raising a claim at an Employment Tribunal.	<p>Scottish Ministers have committed not to have Employment Tribunal fees in Scotland, using powers secured through the Smith Commission. There are currently no fees applied in the Employment Tribunal following the Supreme Court ruling that the previous fee regime was discriminatory.</p> <p>Due to delays caused by the pandemic and EU Exit the UK Government continue to draft the Order in Council to transfer Employment Tribunals to the Scottish Parliament. A consultation will be held once this has been finalised and we will ensure that disabled people are included. We expect that the consultation will take place later this year.</p>

77.	We will work with disabled people's organisations and Police Scotland to encourage greater reporting of disability hate crimes and to further the implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion.	We have worked with Disabled People's Organisations and Police Scotland to raise awareness of hate crime and encourage greater reporting of disability hate crimes. We launched hate crime campaigns in 2017, 2018 and 2020. The 2020 'Letters from Scotland' campaign was in response to concerns raised, including from disability organisations, that there had been an increase in hate incidents, both offline and online, throughout the pandemic. Transport Scotland have committed to a Hate Crime Charter on public transport. A pilot was run December 2019/January 2020 in both bus and rail. Work was paused due to Covid-19 but they are working toward a potential soft launch of the Charter in Spring 2021. Additionally Disability Equality Scotland received funding from the Ferries Accessibility fund to run a separate pilot with Caledonian MacBrayne to design and implement policy and guidance which challenges hate crime on the ferry network, encouraging reporting and working with transport staff to increase knowledge and awareness of hate crime. A report on the progress of Tackling Prejudice and Building Connected Communities Action Plan, in response to recommendations made by the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion, will be published later this year.
78.	As part of the process of implementing Equally Safe, our strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls, we will engage with the disabled people's panel to identify specific actions to support disabled women and girls who experience gender-based violence	Equally Safe explicitly recognises the intersectionality of disability and gender based violence and will continue to explore actions to support disabled women and girls who experience it. The Covid-19 pandemic has prevented direct consultation with the disabled people's panel. However we are working with colleagues in Keys To Life policy on a working group looking at gender based violence and learning disabilities. The group will produce an action plan later this year to improve education on sex and healthy relationships, sexual and reproductive health for people with learning disabilities. There are also actions to improve awareness and training of public service staff in responding in a person-centred way. The Key Messages on Healthy Relationships and Consent are being adapted into an Easy Read version, and materials on relationships, sexual health and parenting are being added to the RSHP national online resource for teachers later this year.

79.	We will work together to explore how the justice system could better understand and respond to individuals with autism as they interact as witnesses, victims, suspects or offenders.	<p>The Supporting Offenders with Learning Disabilities (SOLD) Network, funded through Community Justice, works to improve the understanding of the needs of people with communication support needs in the Justice system. This includes support for autistic people. Working collaboratively with the Law Society Scotland and other partners including Police, Courts and Scottish Prison Service, the group has been working to address the needs of vulnerable people in the justice system. SOLD have recently published their Practice Guide for Defence Solicitors in Scotland, which is the latest in a series of publications and complements their Practice Guide for Support Staff in the Criminal Justice System. Work is continuing on ways to improve the Criminal Justice pathway and improve support for people with communication support needs.</p> <p>In January 2020 - following a period of consultation and engagement with a number of stakeholders, including the National Autistic Society and Scottish Autism - we commenced legislation to make Appropriate Adult provision a statutory service. Appropriate Adults provide support for adults with communication support needs during police procedures and local authorities now have a statutory duty to deliver this service across Scotland. Local authorities also now have a legal responsibility to deliver training for Appropriate Adults, while the Care Inspectorate is responsible for assessing the quality of provision across the country. To support the implementation of the statutory service we have created, in partnership with COSLA, a new post of National Appropriate Adult Coordinator and we have established a national oversight group which is chaired by the Mental Welfare Commission and includes partners and stakeholders from across justice, health and social care.</p>
80.	We will work with partners, including disabled people and the organisations that represent them, to identify negative impacts on disabled people of the current legal aid framework for contributions and develop	Following a period of public consultation in 2019 there is support for developing a new statutory framework for a modern, user-centred legal aid service for Scotland. The ability of disabled people to access justice through the current legal aid system was expressly highlighted as requiring reform particularly in regard to reasonable adjustments and physical accessibility of legal advice, and is an area of law which may benefit from more targeted provision. The Scottish Government is considering how best to take forward supported reforms.

	options for change and make any legislative changes required.	
81.	From 2016, the seven main criminal justice organisations will publish their most important pieces of information in alternative formats. An online secure website will be developed to provide fully-accessible case information for victims and witnesses.	<p>The Criminal Justice Disability Project (2014-2018) enabled all seven criminal justice organisations to meet regularly and discuss equality matters enabling good ideas to be shared and developed as a team. Examples include the jointly developed Reasonable Adjustments support pack and Easy Read translations for documents including the development of a common vocabulary in Easy Read format and the Easy Read complaints procedure.</p> <p>Each of the criminal justice organisations has committed to providing all of their main publications on the internet and using tools such as Browsealoud. These will be available in alternative formats, including BSL, if appropriate. All DVDs published on justice partner websites will have a BSL translation and also include sub-titles. Easy Read versions of key documents will be provided where appropriate and this standard will be provided by default in future if possible. All organisations have the facility to translate appropriate information into alternative formats and minority languages on request. Guidance was prepared regarding the use of video conferencing facilities for meetings to ensure inclusion of those with a disability. The Witness Portal is a key deliverable in Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service's (COPFS) Digital Transformation Programme. The planned delivery timeframe was impacted by COVID-19, but a Beta Witness Portal solution will be evaluated by end March 2021. The new Witness Portal service will be formally implemented in 2021 in line with the agreed delivery plan.</p>
82.	The seven main criminal justice organisations will carry out site audits of their buildings to identify any physical access barriers that need to be removed. This information will be available on each	<p>Scottish Legal Aid Board have audited all their premises against appropriate accessibility standards and completed the upload of information (in October 2018) to all websites.</p> <p>COPFS has carried out access assessments in relation to each of its offices in Scotland and an Access Report has been produced. Publication has been paused pending the re-design of the COPFS website, which is expected to conclude in Spring 2021 when the Access Reports will be published.</p>

	<p>organisation's website from 2016.</p>	<p>Court and tribunal facilities are valuable, specialist assets. Since 2015/16 the Scottish Courts & Tribunal Service have made a number of significant developments across the estate; updating accessibility information on their website is ongoing.</p> <p>Scottish Prison Service carried out site audits during 2016, which identified barriers within the public areas of their estate. The findings of the audits are available to post on our website and arrangements are being made for this to be completed.</p> <p>Police Scotland worked with Disability Equality Scotland to conduct a pilot accessibility audit. The findings of this were discussed to assist, where possible, with establishing consistent protocols for access audits across the Police Scotland estate. Police Scotland are committed to ensuring our buildings and services are accessible to all our communities.</p>
83.	<p>We will continue to work with the Law Society of Scotland to encourage the promotion of specialism in disability discrimination law and will promote awareness of such activity.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government publicly consulted on legal aid reform between June and September 2019. The findings and analysis of this consultation were published in June 2020 - Legal aid reform: consultation analysis - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</p> <p>A small majority of respondents supported that more targeted provision could improve access to legally aided services in certain geographical areas or for groups with specific legal needs, such as domestic violence, disability or persons from a minority ethnic background. The issue was also raised, more generally, that a lack of funding for reasonable adjustments was perceived to create inequity for disabled people.</p> <p>We intend to work with relevant stakeholders further to these findings as a legal aid reform Bill is developed, for introduction in the next parliamentary session.</p>
84.	<p>The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) recognises that those most vulnerable to fires are predominately elderly individuals or people with significant health or mobility</p>	<p>SFRS works closely with partner agencies to identify those most at risk in our communities, initially through the Home Fire Safety Visit (HFSV) programme. The risk recognition training to partners highlights those most at risk from fire, which includes individuals with mobility problems and recognised disabilities. This helps to ensure we receive referrals for those most in need of support. SFRS is developing a new style of visit called Safe and Well, which is a free, person-centred home visit</p>

	<p>issues. SFRS will aim to focus the delivery of its preventative activities, including the Home Fire Safety programme, on those people and will work closely with partners within the health and social care arena to achieve this.</p>	<p>which expands upon previous HFSVs. Staff will continue to give fire safety advice but they will also identify risk and provide or signpost people to advice on a wider range of issues, including health, wellbeing and crime prevention, while passing on referrals where a more specialist approach is needed.</p> <p>In 2020/2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions in person Home Fire Safety visits were reduced and alternative fire safety information was made available to all members of the public by phone or an online assessment. Safe and Well is progressing for roll out in 2021, but this may be impacted by COVID-19.</p>
<p>Ambition 5: Active participation</p>		
<p>85.</p>	<p>We are determined to increase representation of disabled people in our democratic institutions. Our Access To Elected Office Fund (Scotland) is supporting those who wish to stand in the 2017 local government elections by helping to meet the additional costs disabled people face when seeking election. We will use the evaluation of the 2017 fund to make any necessary improvements to ensure it works for disabled people and will continue this fund for the Scottish Parliamentary elections in 2021.</p>	<p>The Access to Elected Office Fund (Scotland) supported 39 disabled candidates to stand for election to local councils in 2017. 15 candidates were elected across Scotland, representing a range of disabilities, political parties and were gender balanced. We have maintained the fund for the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections.</p>

86.	Our current record level of investment in supporting the capacity of Disabled People's Organisations will be maintained during the lifetime of this parliament. Through this programme of work, we will explore how disability impacts different equality groups and what this means for our policies, services and communities.	The level of investment for Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) has been maintained throughout this parliamentary session, and in some cases increased. Further, we have worked with a number of DPOs to support their Covid-19 work by producing accessible versions of public health information, supporting helplines and providing IT and training to help disabled people who have not been connected to the internet keep up to date with public health messages and to reduce social isolation and loneliness.
87.	Local authorities have been asked that at least 1% of their budgets are subject to Community Choices budgeting and we will actively encourage local authorities to ensure that disabled people can play a full part in the participatory budgeting process.	In 2017 the Scottish Government and COSLA announced that at least 1% of local government budgets would be decided through participatory budgeting (PB) by the end of 2021 and agreed a Framework for the operation of the agreement. This meant that communities across Scotland will have a direct say in how around £100 million of local authority funds could be spent. The Scottish Government worked with Glasgow Disability Alliance to explore how best disabled people can play a full part in PB processes and how PB can be used to encourage participation in public life and advance equality of opportunity. The Scottish Government funds a PB team in COSLA, PB Scotland and Glasgow Disability Alliance to support accessible and inclusive processes. A National Participatory Budgeting Strategic Group was established in 2020 to help guide this work. Work to further progress PB has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic but the group is focussing on recovery planning.
88.	We will publish a strategy in 2017 to tackle social isolation and loneliness, which is informed by disabled people and seeks to tackle the specific barriers to developing social and	The Scottish Government's first national strategy to tackle social isolation and loneliness and build stronger social connections, A Connected Scotland, was published on 18 December 2018. The strategy considered 4 main priorities which prioritised community cohesion and empowerment, tackling stigma and encouraging kindness and creating the opportunities and infrastructure that allows people to build connections. Within these priority areas, actions were created to deliver our ambitions around Scotland's communities.

	community connections that disabled people face.	As the Scottish Government pivoted to tackle the impact of the coronavirus, the delivery phases of the Strategy were paused. However as part of our cross government approach, our commitment to tackling social isolation and loneliness has only increased as we have seen how all our lives have changed over the course of 2020.
89.	We will actively promote a new Inclusive Communication hub across the public sector in early 2017, providing advice and practical assistance. We are also taking forward a programme of work on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), which is focused on the provision of communication equipment and support.	<p>The Inclusive Communication Hub website was launched in 2017 by Disability Equality Scotland, funded by the Scottish Government.</p> <p>Welcome to the Inclusive Communication Hub Inspiring Inclusive Information in Scotland</p> <p>A dedicated page has been established on the Hub which provides details of the organisations that form the Inclusive Communication Alliance and related campaign documents including 'Using Inclusive Communication to help Scotland recover', a guidance document that sets out the inclusive communication actions all organisations should take now to reduce communication disadvantage.</p>
90.	Through our Scottish Approach to Service Design initiative we will work with disabled people, organisations and experts in design to ensure that the methods and tools used in digital public services allow disabled people to participate on a fair and equal basis in the design of those services. This work has already begun and we aim to publish guidance iteratively through 2017-2020. Initial guidance will be published in early 2017.	<p>We have continued our work into providing tools, methods and processes to help with inclusion and have published these in the The Scottish Approach to Service Design (SAtSD) - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) available online. We are planning to release a second edition. This will have more information on how to conduct research remotely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are working to ensure the research we do can be done remotely and tools are accessible and secure for those who want to take part. Work is on-going to identify the best tools to help the voice of disabled people continue to be heard. • We continue to make sure that any project team hears the voice of disabled people throughout the project. We've continued to bring the voice of users into (Social Security Division) through meetings and research activities. • We are developing a new inclusion feedback form which allows people attending our research events to feedback any individual requirements which would assist them to take part remotely.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We began testing our research methods to understand and improve the inclusivity for disabled participants. This was started in Feb 2020 but has been delayed due to the events of 2020. We are working with partners to develop a checklist for inclusive methods.
91.	We will publish the first ever National Action Plan on British Sign Language in October 2017, which will improve access to information and services for our citizens whose first or preferred language is BSL	<p>The BSL National Plan for 2017 to 2023 was published on 24 October 2017. This consists of 70 actions across ten long-term ambitions, with the long-term aim that people whose primary language is BSL will be fully involved in all areas of daily and public life in Scotland.</p> <p>British Sign Language (BSL): National Plan 2017 to 2023 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot) And BSL Version - BSL Scotland Act 2015 – BSL Scotland Act 2015</p>
92.	In 2017, we will highlight the barriers to inclusion that disabled people face, with a particular focus on employment, in the next phase of the One Scotland Campaign.	<p>The media campaign was launched on 6 July 2017 and had a considerable reach across social media platforms Facebook and Twitter.</p> <p>Get Past the Awkward - The First Handshake and Let's Make Tea</p>
93.	Through our public appointments improvement programme, we will drive forward activity to improve the diversity of Scotland's boardrooms, including outreach activity with disabled people and minority ethnic communities.	<p>For 2019 (last published figures available), 12% of people appointed were disabled compared to 7% in 2018. 6% of people appointed in 2019 were from a minority ethnic background compared to 3.6% in 2018.</p> <p>In 2019, 13% of applications were from disabled people compared to 9% in 2018. In 2019, 8.7% of applications were from people from a minority ethnic background, exceeding for the first time the 8% target. In 2018 6% of applications were from people from a minority ethnic background. With Inclusion Scotland we have trialled a project that provided mentored public body board experience for a group of disabled people, as part of our work to develop the pipeline of talented people for public appointments. We will shortly be starting a project to involve disabled people</p>

		and people from a minority ethnic background in the infrastructure of the public appointments process.
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