



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Scottish Government response to **Doing Politics Differently –**

The Report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland

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It is a great honour to present the Scottish Government's full response to the first Citizens' Assembly of Scotland.

The work of the Citizens' Assembly was truly inspiring in showing how a cross section of our people can come together, learn together, debate and even argue together, then, with respect to all involved, together decide what is important to them for the future of our nation.

And what a vision they have presented to us. Addressing poverty; strengthening a sustainable economy through research, technology and lifelong learning; supporting a strong health service; meeting the needs of our young people and ensuring our mental wellbeing; all underpinned by a fully informed, fully engaged, fully involved people.

The Assembly has described itself as a "mini Scotland". That mini Scotland has produced a report to be proud of, and one whose scale and ambition challenges all of us in politics and across society.

This response from the Scottish Government sets out the plans we already have in the areas the Assembly has identified for action. But the Assembly's vision goes beyond the immediate plans of this government to the long term future of us all, a future I believe we can achieve if we take up the invitation to do politics differently.

George Adam MSP
Minister for Parliamentary Business

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The Citizens' Assembly of Scotland was established by the Scottish Government, supported by the Scottish Parliament, to bring together a representative cross section of the people of Scotland and consider three questions:

- What kind of country are we seeking to build?
- How best can we overcome the challenges Scotland and the world face in the 21st century, including those arising from Brexit?
- What further work should be carried out to give us the information we need to make informed choices about the future of the country?



The Assembly worked before and through the pandemic, in both face-to-face sessions, and then online. In January 2021 it published its report **Doing Politics Differently – the report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland**¹ which contained 10 vision statements and 60 recommendations, grouped into eight themes. The report was noted by the last Scottish Parliament, before the recent Scottish General Election, and commended for further consideration to its successor Parliament.

1 [Report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland](#)

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This response details how the government plans take forward the Assembly's recommendations across the eight themes of its report, as set out in the Programme for Government published in September 2021² and other government publications, such as the Covid Recovery Strategy and the draft Framework for Tax. Some recommendations raise similar issues across themes, notably the need for readily available and comprehensible public information.

The response also sets out the government's intention to develop further participative democracy, including the Citizens' Assembly model – one of the key recommendations of the report. Scotland's Climate Assembly has already reported and other assemblies are planned. Some recommendations raise fundamental questions about the scope and structure of public engagement in Scotland's governmental and Parliamentary institutions, and accountability within the system, which will require further work with the Scottish Parliament and others.

The vision set out by the Assembly for the future of Scotland is ambitious and inspiring. Successfully realising this vision for Scotland will be a long term project, beyond the scope of a single Programme for Government or even Parliamentary term. It is a challenge set by the Assembly to the Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and all parts of Scottish society and requires all to **do politics differently**.

² [A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22 – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/programme-for-government-2021-22/pages/1-introduction.aspx)

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The Citizens' Assembly of Scotland was announced by the First Minister on 24 April 2019³ as a democratic process designed to bring people together to hear evidence; deliberate on what they heard; and to make recommendations for action.

The aim set out by the First Minister was to respond to a polarisation of politics by finding ways of debating choices respectfully and seeking maximum areas of agreement.

³ [Brexit and Scotland's future: First Minister statement – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Brexit_and_Scotland's_future:_First_Minister_statement_-_gov.scot)



While Citizens' Assemblies are widely used internationally, this was the first national assembly to be established in Scotland. The Assembly comprised of a group of around 100 citizens selected from across the country, broadly representative of the adult population of Scotland as a whole.⁴

The Assembly was asked to address the following three questions:

- What kind of country are we seeking to build?
- How best can we overcome the challenges Scotland and the world face in the 21st century, including those arising from Brexit?

⁴ The members were selected to be broadly representative of the adult population (16 and over) in terms of age, gender, socio-economic class/educational qualifications, ethnic group, geography and political attitudes. Full information on the recruitment process is available at: www.citizensassembly.scot/about/assembly-members

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- What further work should be carried out to give us the information we need to make informed choices about the future of the country?

The Assembly first met on 26/27 October 2019. Following three further meetings, the Assembly was suspended in the early stages of the pandemic. It resumed meetings online on 5 September 2020, and concluded its work on 5 December 2020.

Doing Politics Differently – the report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland⁵ was published on 13 January 2021. It contains 10 vision statements and 60 recommendations, each with substantial levels of support from Assembly members.⁶

⁵ [Report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland](#)

⁶ Annex 13 and Annex 14 provide a full breakdown of the voting results; [Citizens Assembly Main Report \(theapsgroup.scot\)](#)

The opening vision statement sets the scene for the ambitious and comprehensive proposals that follow:

The Scotland we want to see should lead with integrity, honesty, humility and transparency, in a self-sufficient and innovative way, and actively include the people of Scotland in decision making.⁷

The report also sets out the hopes of Assembly members for their work and their report:

We gathered, talked and agreed. We believe our vision and recommendations represent all of the people of Scotland. We ask the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government to consider our words as they plan and decide our future, and to listen closely to what we have said.⁸

⁷ [Report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland](#), page 8

⁸ [Report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland](#), page 5

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The report captures clearly the commitment of the Assembly members to their task; the importance they attached to the opportunity to learn, to consider, to become involved and to influence the political process in Scotland; and their criticisms of the usual way that government and politics are conducted.

This response from the Scottish Government sets out the actions that are being taken or are planned on the individual recommendations made by the Assembly.

The response also sets out the government's overall view of the Assembly process, the role that Citizens' Assemblies, through the Scotland's Climate Assembly, have begun to play, and plans for future use of participative democracy to build on the work of this first Citizens' Assembly and ensure that, in the future, Scotland is doing politics differently.

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The Citizens' Assembly of Scotland provided a unique opportunity to hear what people in Scotland think about what Scotland should be, and for those views to be presented directly to the Scottish Government and Parliament.

The Citizens' Assembly was different in its nature from more conventional forms of engagement by the government. The Assembly was not a consultation for interested stakeholders, nor an expert working group or commission. Instead it was a representative sample of the people of Scotland, with a wide range of backgrounds, views, interests and knowledge. The Assembly itself adopted the description "a mini-Scotland"

Its process was therefore different. Information and evidence was provided to members to allow them to learn about the issues, question experts and consider what was important to them.

As a representative cross section of the people of Scotland, the views of the Assembly have a different status than those of other consultative bodies: these recommendations tell the Scottish Government and Parliament what is important to the "mini Scotland" that was gathered together, and what can be considered important to the nation as a whole.

The first striking feature of this different kind of report is the scale of the ambition that Assembly members have for Scotland.

This is set out most clearly in the Assembly's vision for the nation:⁹

- The Scotland we want to see should lead with integrity, honesty, humility and transparency, in a self-sufficient and innovative way, and actively include the people of Scotland in decision making.

9 [Vision | Citizens Assembly](#)

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- Authorities have a duty to publish information that is valid, accurate, reliable, verifiable and accessible to all.
- Scotland should be a country where the people and government communicate with each other honestly and respectfully; whilst working together with concise and factual information, based on openness and accountability.
- The Scotland that we would want to see would be leaders in innovation, with an obligation to invest in people to create jobs, confidence, development and growth.
- Scotland should be a country where the people of Scotland have properly resourced and managed health and social care services, built around individuals and communities to achieve good health and wellbeing for all.
- In order to achieve a better standard of living and opportunities for all we must invest in accessible, relevant training, support and improved income through a realistic living wage.
- Scotland should be a country where people are supported out of poverty by identifying and removing barriers to employment, education and housing.
- Scotland should be a country where all taxes are simplified and made more proportionate so that everyone is taxed accordingly; taxation is transparent and understandable; measures are introduced to minimise tax avoidance: and companies are incentivised to adopt green values.
- The Scotland we want to see will provide support, education, growth opportunities and security for all young people to realise their potential, both physically and mentally, regardless of their background with a view to securing their future and that of our country.
- Scotland should be a country where we encourage and support everyone to reach their full potential through support and training. Providing fair and equality-driven opportunities, through personal development, with a focus on life and vocational skills, apprenticeships and hands-on experience.

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The Assembly then identified a wide range of themes as their priorities for action, with specific recommendations in each:

- How decisions are taken
- Incomes and poverty
- Tax and economy
- Young people
- Sustainability
- Health and wellbeing
- Further powers
- A mixed group, including connectivity, justice, state pension age, and lifelong learning

The report also shows the concern of Assembly members for particular sectors of society: the challenges facing young people; the emphasis on mental health across society; lifelong opportunities for learning and development to prevent people being left behind; a simple test for poverty which everyone can apply to their own circumstances.

The government shares many of the Assembly's priorities: alleviating poverty; sustainability and a just transition to net zero; investing in training and technology; maintaining the health service; transparent taxation; increasing the responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament; greater participation of the public in government.

However, there are also themes throughout the report that should worry all involved in the government of Scotland: a lack of transparency and accessible information; and a lack of trust and accountability in politicians and public bodies.

This response sets out the government's detailed plans for many of the areas identified by the Assembly. However, the government is clear that meeting the vision of the Assembly, and its call to do politics differently, requires more than one government programme and more than one Parliamentary term. The Assembly has presented a direct challenge to all in government and the political system to meet the scale of the aspirations the people have for Scotland.

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The vision and recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland have demonstrated the potential of bringing together a representative group of citizens to consider questions of national importance in great depth and produce wide ranging and ambitious recommendations. Its example has already been followed by the Scottish Climate Assembly, and more assemblies are planned.

Members of this Assembly were in the unique position of deliberating before and during the pandemic. Its vision of **“what kind of country are we seeking to build”** is a crucial contribution both to the immediate task of recovering from Covid and to building back to a better nation, already recognised in the government's Covid Recovery Strategy.¹⁰

¹⁰ [Covid Recovery Strategy: for a fairer future – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/covid-recovery-strategy)

The Assembly also sends a clear message to the Scottish Government and Parliament, that the business of government and society is, or should be, a national undertaking, involving all. As the members say in their introduction:¹¹

Too often discussions are about what other people should do for me, but they should be about what I can do and what I can contribute. This is not just about the government, we should all be working together as one nation. The onus is on us – everyone.

This response sets out actions the government is taking now on the recommendations of the Assembly, but the spirit and scope of its report goes beyond the immediate plans of government to a wider, long term approach to the future of Scotland. Providing an ambitious vision for the nation, and challenging its government and Parliament to deliver it, will be a lasting legacy of the Citizens' Assembly.

¹¹ [Members' Introduction | Citizens Assembly](#)



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As the first national exercise of this nature in Scotland, the Citizens' Assembly for Scotland pioneered and developed its own approach to the task it had been set. The Scottish Government and Parliament also had to establish their roles and their relations with the Assembly, as this new body established itself, and its potential to refresh the political process became clear.

Establishment of the Assembly

The establishment of the Assembly was initially proposed by the Scottish Government, which prepared a remit and terms of reference,¹² and an agreement on the independence and support of the Assembly (including funding; the final costs of the Assembly are set out at **Annex A**).¹³

12 [Remit and terms of reference as amended 3 November 2020.pdf \(citizensassembly.scot\)](#)

13 [Citizens' Assembly of Scotland - memorandum of understanding between Scottish Ministers and Conveners - final 0.pdf \(citizensassembly.scot\)](#)

The Scottish Parliament also supported the establishment of the Assembly. In September 2019 it passed a motion welcoming the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland, and noting the principles, remit and terms of reference for the Assembly.¹⁴

The Assembly's processes

The Assembly worked primarily through set piece meetings, chaired by the Convener (who was appointed by the government, supported by the Parliament), supported by a secretariat made up of civil servants, and professional facilitators. A Stewarding Group provided access to expert advice on the processes of the Assembly, and subject experts provided evidence on the subjects under discussion.¹⁵ Assembly members also met a politicians' panel with representatives from across Scotland's political parties.

14 [Official Report - Parliamentary Business : Scottish Parliament](#)

15 Further details of these arrangements can be found here: [The Basics | Citizens Assembly](#)

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The Assembly met four times in face to face weekend events between October 2019 and February 2020. It was due to meet for two further weekends which were suspended in accordance with public health requirements relating to Covid. The Assembly reconvened online in September 2020 with shorter meetings over four weekends before publishing its report and recommendations in January 2021.

The events, both face to face and online, were designed around facilitated conversations and structured ways of working. At each event evidence was presented and there was an opportunity to hear views in a respectful way, along with facilitated discussions which supported participants to assess the evidence and collectively come to agreed set of recommendations. The work of the Assembly was guided by the principles¹⁶ of independence, transparency, inclusion, access, balance, cumulative learning and open-mindedness.

16 [Principles | Citizens Assembly](#)

Assembly meetings considered the following topics:¹⁷

- Weekend 1: How the Assembly will work and understanding the constitutional position in Scotland
- Weekend 2: How to engage critically with evidence and sources, what leads to a good life and a good society and how values influence the kind of nation we wish to be
- Weekend 3: Constitutional issues following the UK General Election and a conversation with a politicians' panel on priorities and challenges for Scotland after the General Election and, separately, sustainability
- Weekend 4: Tax and finance
- Weekend 5 (online): Reflections of the impact of Covid and responding to Covid

17 The agenda for each meeting along with links to additional materials and a report of each meeting is available at: [Meetings | Citizens Assembly](#)

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The Assembly met for a further three online meetings to draft and agree their vision and recommendations; no further evidence was heard at these meetings.

A significant proportion of the report is devoted to the reflections of the members themselves:¹⁸ who they are, why they agreed to get involved, what the experience has meant to them and what they hope will be achieved as a result. From these individual stories, it is clear that the commitment, and interaction, of Assembly members are as important to the success of the process as the terms of reference, the supporting groups of experts and professionals, and other formal arrangements to enable the work of the Assembly.

Publishing the Assembly's report

Following publication of the report on 13 January, Assembly members presented their conclusions to Scottish Ministers at an online event which took place on 21 January 2021. This gave them the opportunity to share first hand their experiences and ambitions for the report, and impress Ministers directly with their

18 Chapter 6, www.citizensassembly.scot Doing Politics Differently, The Report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland, January 2020

commitment and enthusiasm for the Assembly and its work.

An event also took place in the Scottish Parliament on 15 February 2021. This event was hosted by the then Presiding Officer as part of the Scottish Futures Forum, and comprised contributions from the then Presiding Officer, the Convener, a political panel and group of Assembly members. This again gave Assembly members the opportunity to communicate their views directly to MSPs

The report was debated in Parliament the month after it was published on 18 February 2021. Michael Russell, then Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Europe and External Affairs, acknowledged the extent of the vision in the report and its implications for all political parties and the overall political process:

It is also clear that the report and its recommendations are only the start of a long-term project that envisages a transformative change to Scottish politics, in which engagement with Government and the practice of decision making is a given. That will result in better deliberation, consideration, accessibility, inclusivity and, ultimately, governance.

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I hope that we can all welcome the opportunity to embrace such changes, even if we do not agree with every detail of the report, or if we come from a different political or philosophical perspective when considering the underlying messages. The fact is that the report challenges us all—no matter our political or philosophical perspective—and some of it is particularly challenging to those of us who have been active full-time politicians for many years.¹⁹

The debate in the Scottish Parliament showed widespread recognition of many of the issues raised by the Assembly, including those critical of the political process itself. The Parliament agreed to a motion thanking members of the Assembly for their hard work, efforts, commitment and collaborative approach, and commending the report for further consideration by the next session of the Parliament, while recognising that different political parties would take different views on the recommendations of the report.

19 [Official Report - Parliamentary Business : Scottish Parliament](#)

Since the publication of the Assembly's report

The publication of the report was too late in the Parliamentary session to allow a formal response from the Scottish Government before the Scottish General Election of May 2021. However, the timing did allow the report to be considered by political parties in drafting their manifestoes for that election.

On 7 September 2021 the Scottish Government published **A Fairer, Greener Scotland**, its first Programme for Government for the new Parliamentary session.²⁰ The Programme for Government is the mechanism to set out plans to take forward manifesto commitments and other government initiatives. This response draws on the Programme for Government to show the actions the government intends to take on the priorities identified by the Citizens' Assembly. The government's plans are not identical to the Assembly's specific recommendations in each area, but the response is structured to show the extent to which both the general thrust and the details of the Assembly's themes and recommendations are reflected in the Programme for Government.

20 [A Fairer, Greener Scotland: Programme for Government 2021-22 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) (PfG)

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The Covid pandemic and the Assembly

As well as the practicalities of the Assembly's work, it was clear from early in the pandemic that it would also affect the substance of the issues that were being considered. Indeed the Assembly was uniquely placed to deliberate on the impact of the pandemic as an established and structured process of public participation that had started work before Covid.

When the Assembly reconvened in September 2020 members reflected on their experiences and identified issues arising from Covid to recall when they came to consider their final recommendations. These were:²¹

- ensuring a more equal and socially responsible country
- supporting education and training for all young people
- prioritising health and wellbeing
- responding to mental health impacts

²¹ For full details see Annex 10, www.citizensassembly.scot Doing Politics Differently, The Report of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland, January 2020

- building more resilience into planning
- measures to support recovery
- focussing on a sustainable economic recovery
- delivering fair work and pay and valuing key workers
- recognising the challenges for public finances
- establishing a fairer tax system
- tackling the climate crisis
- improving decision-making through citizens' involvement
- strengthening devolution and improving working between Governments

The Assembly eventually made specific references to Covid in the recommendations in relation to greater public involvement in decision making (**recommendation 6**); acknowledging those who supported society during the pandemic (**recommendation 9**); and the need to invest in business and secure jobs to support the recovery (**recommendations 32 and 41**)



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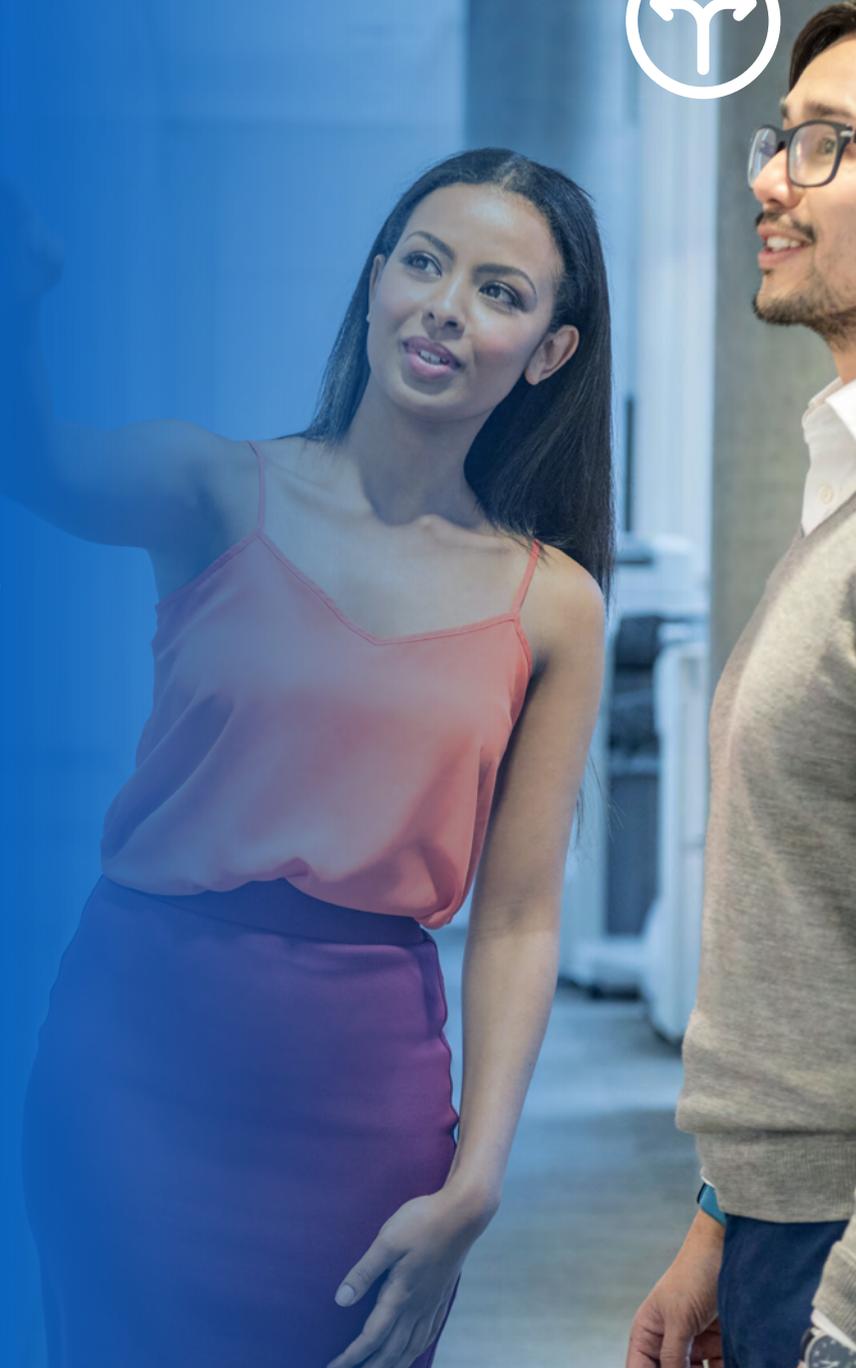
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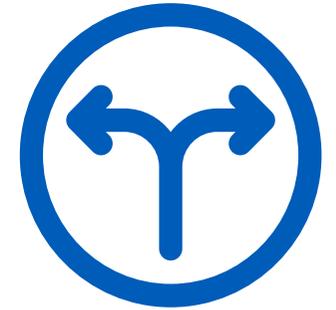
1. How decisions are taken

“covering a range of ideas to
improve citizen participation
in decision-making, the
provision of information and the
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‘Doing Politics Differently’



How decisions are taken summary of recommendations



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Recommendations 1 – 14 are themed as ‘How decisions are taken’. They propose greater use of the citizens’ assembly approach, and establishment of new mechanisms for direct participation in the democratic process such as a ‘house of citizens’ and ‘citizens’ committee’. The other recommendations under this theme aim to ensure the integrity and improve the democratic accountability of both government and individual MSPs.

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There are three main themes to the recommendations in this section:

- The use of **citizens' assemblies and other forms of direct participation of citizens on political processes (recommendations 1-6)**
- **integrity and accountability for politicians and government (recommendations 7 - 10)**
- More **accessible and easily understood information** to allow citizens to participate fully in decision making (**recommendations 11 - 14**)

The government is committed to promoting **citizens' assemblies** and other forms of deliberative democracy – such as citizen juries, mini-publics and people's panels – to bring people together to generate new ideas; add fairness, equality and credibility to the policy making process; and improve trust between government and the people it serves.

A second Citizens' Assembly – Scotland's Climate Assembly²⁴ – has now taken place, and its report and recommendations were laid in the Scottish Parliament on 23 June. The government has now set out its plans for further use of the citizens' assembly model,²⁵ including an assembly for under 16s.²⁶ There will also be a citizens' assembly on local government funding, including Council Tax.²⁷

The Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party shared policy programme²⁸ also sets out a commitment to increased use of deliberative engagement, development of support for effective citizens' assemblies, and deliberative engagement on funding local government, starting locally and culminating in the national citizens' assembly.

24 [Welcome to Scotland's Climate Assembly | Climate Assembly](#)

25 PfG, page 105

26 PfG, page 106

27 PfG, page 95 and 106

28 [Scottish Government and Scottish Green Party – Shared Policy Programme – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#) (see pages 24-25)

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Later this year, an expert group will report to Ministers on institutionalising inclusive participatory democracy across Scotland's democratic processes, including future governance and question setting for citizens' assemblies.²⁹ The **Participatory Democracy Working Group** brings together experts from Scotland, UK and international organisations to propose recommendations on making participation routine and effective. This will include defining the principles, standards and aims of using participatory processes including (but not limited to) citizens' assemblies; identifying methods of governance for delivering credible and trustworthy participatory democratic processes; and setting out options, and an indication of the resources necessary, to establish and deliver these routinely and sustainably.

Other recommendations from the Assembly on a **house of citizens** and a **citizens' committee** go to the heart of how parliamentary democracy in Scotland operates. They engage the interests of all political parties, civic Scotland and the Scottish Parliament at an institutional level. Consideration is therefore needed with these key stakeholders on how to address the recommendations. There would be a challenge in incorporating a

representative selection of the public directly into existing government and Parliamentary institutions which are based on representative democracy, elected at regular intervals. The Scottish Government plans to engage with the Scottish Parliament on the best way to take these forward.

Similar considerations apply to the recommendations that concern the **conduct and integrity of politicians** and the **responsibilities of MSPs to their constituents**, as well as the **appointment of a non-political independent review body**. Again the Scottish Government plans to engage with the Scottish Parliament on the best way to take these forward.

The Assembly also recommends that the Scottish Government publishes **information that will allow it to be held accountable for progress against its commitments and goals**.

The annual Programme for Government sets out the actions planned for the coming year and beyond, including the legislative programme, and progress since the previous year. While not a new approach, this is a comprehensive publication which attempts to fulfil the objectives of these Assembly recommendations.

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In addition, the National Performance Framework provides information on progress towards National Outcomes and key national indicators.³⁰

However, the clear and strongly expressed recommendations from the Assembly are a reminder (with other recommendations such as recommendation 19 on poverty, recommendations 25, 27 and 28 on tax, recommendation 39 on sustainability and recommendation 45 on the cost of the NHS) that however much easily accessible information the government believes it is publishing, citizens may find that information both difficult to find and difficult to understand. The Assembly has again illustrated that government information can appear to be targeted only at professionals rather than the public.

30 [National Performance Framework | National Performance Framework](#)

The Open Government Partnership (OGP)³¹ is a global partnership that aims to make governments more inclusive, responsive, and accountable. OGP supports governments to work in transparent, accountable and inclusive ways, which resonate with these Assembly recommendations. Scotland has been a member of OGP since 2016 and the third Open Government Action Plan (2021-25) is now under development, in collaboration with civic society. It will again focus on democratic improvement and using open government to help tackle inequalities, institutionalise inclusive participation across the work of government, improve financial transparency and increase access to open data.

31 [Scotland, United Kingdom \(opengovpartnership.org\)](#)

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On **libraries (recommendation 13)**³² the government recognises the crucial role they play in delivering services that support community wellbeing. Covid has impacted the delivery of public library services, but libraries also have a role to play in supporting their communities to recover. A one-off fund of up to £1.25 million will be provided through the Scottish Libraries Information Council to support them to stay open.³³

The recommendations in this section go to the heart of the Assembly's report. Calls for greater participation of citizens in government and decision making are being progressed through greater use of citizens' assemblies and better understanding of the options for participative democracy. The need for good information for citizens to exercise these rights properly is clearly set out by the Assembly, and is recognised by the government. Some of the recommendations present a challenge to the underlying structures of Parliamentary democracy as it is set up in Scotland. These will require further work by the government and the Scottish Parliament itself, taking account of the observations and recommendations the Assembly makes on trust and honesty between politicians, the government and people.

32 Recommendation 13 has majority support and appears in a different section: [Majority Supported | Citizens' Assembly](#)

33 PfG, page 107



Key themes

2. Incomes and poverty



“a range of proposals
to improve incomes and
wages and to both prevent
and tackle poverty”

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[Recommendations 15 – 22](#) are themed as '[Incomes and poverty](#)'.³⁴ They include guaranteeing everyone a minimum level of income and legislating to improve contractual working conditions. The Assembly recommends closer working between the Scottish and UK Governments, as well as local authorities, to support the alleviation of poverty.

³⁴ Recommendation 15 has majority support and appears in a different section: [Majority Supported | Citizens Assembly](#)

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To **define poverty**, the Assembly proposes (**recommendation 19**) that the Scottish Government and Parliament should ask three questions:

- Do you have a roof over your head?
- Can you heat your house?
- Will you be able to put hot food on the table?

This is one of a number of recommendations on the ready availability to the public of easily understood government information (for example recommendations 25, 27 and 28 on tax, recommendation 39 on sustainability and recommendation 45 on the cost of the NHS).

The government already publishes annually a range of statistics on poverty, including food insecurity, fuel poverty and homelessness.³⁵ Other published measures include: income compared to others (relative poverty); whether incomes keep pace with inflation (absolute poverty); whether households are on a low income and have access to basic essentials (combined low income and material deprivation); whether households have experienced relative poverty for three out of the four previous years (persistent poverty). Tracking these different measures helps identify trends in poverty over time and indicate the success of the government's policies.

The government recognises the purpose of this recommendation is to provide a simple, comprehensible test for poverty, and "bring invisible poverty to the foreground".³⁶ However, living in poverty goes beyond meeting basic needs and the information collected and published by government needs to reflect the wider causes and effects of poverty, including, for example, the quality of available food and housing, and the ability to participate in society.

35 [Poverty and income inequality statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

36 [Citizens Assembly Main Report \(theapsgroup.scot\)](http://theapsgroup.scot), Annex 12, recommendation 19, page 189

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The government needs to make sure this wider range of information is available in a way that satisfies the Assembly's call for accessibility.

The wide range of information gathered and published by the government illustrates the complex range of **issues that lead to poverty** and inform policies to address these (**recommendation 20**). The involvement of people with lived experience of poverty is a crucial aspect in this decision making and policy development. The Scottish Government funds both the Poverty Truth Community project³⁷ and the Poverty Alliance's Get Heard Scotland Programme.³⁸ These initiatives help bring together people with lived experience of poverty and inequality with decision-makers, in order to influence national and local policy making, and push for change in public services (as proposed in **recommendation 18**).

37 [Overview – Faith in Community Scotland](#)

38 [Get Heard Scotland – The Poverty Alliance](#)

Also relevant to this recommendation is the **Fairer Scotland Duty**³⁹ which came into force in April 2018, and places a legal responsibility on certain public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. Due to the economic shocks of the pandemic further exacerbating the socio-economic disadvantage experienced by people in Scotland, assessments under the Duty are even more important to make the lives of people experiencing poverty and inequality measurably better. In deciding how to fulfil the Duty, public bodies are legally required to take into account the guidance issued by Scottish Ministers.⁴⁰

This recommendation from the Assembly again points to the need for easily understood information to be readily available on these initiatives.

There are two recommendations on local government involvement in addressing poverty (**recommendations 18 and 22**), including task forces to overcome poverty in each council area.

39 [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

40 [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

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The Scottish Government's Covid Recovery Strategy emphasises the importance of partnership between national and local government in addressing the issues arising from the pandemic, including financial security for low income families.⁴¹ The strategy also details **No One Left Behind** to be delivered with Local Government and the third sector, which will provide £20 million over the next 12 months for employability focused interventions for long-term unemployed people.⁴² The No One Left Behind approach will move away from national programmes offering time-limited support and move towards more localised commissioning and delivery approaches, offering person-centred support.

Other areas in which local government already plays a central role in addressing poverty include the **Scottish Welfare Fund**, an important social safety net administered through local authorities. The Scottish Government is guaranteeing the fund at £41 million per year and has also started an independent review this year to understand how well the Fund is working and whether it could be improved.⁴³ Local authorities also have a duty to report annually on child poverty in line with

41 Covid Recovery Strategy, page 32

42 Covid Recovery Strategy, page 14

43 PfG, page 39

government guidance under the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017⁴⁴.

These initiatives, as well as the emphasis on partnership with local government in the Covid Recovery Strategy, show the importance of local community connections highlighted in these recommendations.

The Assembly calls for the Scottish Government to **work with the UK Government to abolish zero hours contracts (recommendations 17 and 21)**. This is a matter reserved to Westminster, as the recommendations acknowledge. The Scottish Government supports the devolution of responsibility for employment law to the Scottish Parliament, particularly after the UK's exit from the European Union has removed protections provided for workers by EU law.⁴⁵ The government is opposed to inappropriate zero hours contracts and other non-standard types of employment that offer workers little or no job security. The government understands that some workers find zero hours contracts useful, so banning them entirely would remove workers' choice. However, the government recognises the Assembly's clear views on this issue.

44 [Child Poverty \(Scotland\) Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

45 [Scotland's Place in Europe \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot), Chapter 4



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On a **living wage (recommendations 16 and 21)**, the government has long championed payment of at least the real living wage, and encouraged every employer to work constructively with their workforce and trade unions to ensure the right decisions are taken about workplace issues and that workers are treated fairly. The government will continue to progress its vision for Scotland to be a leading Fair Work Nation by 2025, including making payment of the real living wage to all employees a condition of public sector grants by summer 2022.⁴⁶

On the introduction of **a Universal Basic Income** in order to provide **“a real living income to ensure people don't worry about food [and] living costs” (recommendation 15)**,⁴⁷ the Scottish Government is committed, in the longer term, to delivering a Minimum Income Guarantee.⁴⁸ This work will see Scotland leading the world with the design and delivery of a Minimum Income Guarantee. It has real potential to deliver transformational change, reducing poverty and inequality, ensuring

⁴⁶ PfG, pages 75-76

⁴⁷ Recommendation 15 has majority support and appears in a different section: [Majority Supported | Citizens' Assembly](#)

⁴⁸ [Work begins on a Minimum Income Guarantee - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#); PfG, page 37

everyone has enough money to live a decent life and provide **“an assurance that no one will fall below a set income level which allows them to live a dignified life, delivered through targeted payments and other types of support or services provided or subsidised by the state”**. A steering group has been brought together with cross-party and expert representation, which will work to design a future Minimum Income Guarantee. The government will also explore how the concept of **Universal Basic Services** can contribute towards a minimum standard of living.

The Programme for Government and the Covid Recovery Strategy set out a range of other measures the Scottish Government is taking to address the issues of income and poverty identified by the Assembly, and expressed in its vision and recommendations. These include:

- New benefits for children, people on low incomes, carers and disabled people in a **strong social security system** that treats people with dignity, fairness and respect⁴⁹

⁴⁹ PfG, pages 35-39

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- a national mission to **eradicate child poverty**, with a route map to meet an interim target to reduce relative child poverty to 18% by 2023-24⁵⁰
 - a new **Ending Homelessness Together Fund** of £50 million over this Parliament, including £8 million for local authorities to support rapid rehousing plans and efforts to eradicate rough sleeping.⁵¹ Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 a person should be treated as homeless, even if they have accommodation, if it would not be reasonable for them to continue to stay in it.
 - the **Parental Employability Support Fund** to help low income families identified as being most at risk of experiencing poverty⁵²
 - a second **Benefit Take-up Strategy** from October 2021 setting up how the Scottish Government will maximise the take-up of Scottish benefits⁵³
 - publish a **Fuel Poverty Strategy** by the end of the year to address the main drivers of fuel poverty⁵⁴
- The recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on incomes and poverty confirm the central importance of these issues to the people of Scotland, and reinforce the Scottish Government's commitment the national outcome:⁵⁵
- We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

50 PfG, pages 36-38

51 PfG, pages 94-95

52 PfG, page 74;

53 Covid Recovery Strategy, page 15

54 Covid Recovery Strategy, page 15

55 PfG, page 16



Key themes

3. Tax and economy



“covering a range of ideas to improve tax collection, incentives positive behaviours and make taxation fairer, more transparent and better understood, and initiatives to develop new industries and employment opportunities, including through investments in research and development and innovation”

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[Recommendations 23 – 32](#) are themed as 'Tax and economy'. These include proposals for ensuring that everyone – including large commercial bodies – pay their fair share of tax and to promote greater public understanding of the tax system. On the economy, the emphasis is on boosting science and technology investment and skills, supporting desirable business practices, and aiding Scotland's recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, concentrating on small and medium size businesses.

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Tax

There are three themes in the recommendations on tax:

- Encouraging desirable business practices through incentives in the tax system (**recommendation 24**)
- Effective enforcement of taxation (**recommendations 23 and 26**)
- Ensuring public understanding of tax and its importance (**recommendations 25, 27 and 28**)

The bulk of the tax system, including almost all business taxation (with the exception of non-domestic rates), remains reserved to the UK Government.⁵⁶ The Scottish Government is therefore very restricted in the measures it can take to incentivise business behaviours in the ways proposed by the Assembly.

⁵⁶ [Tax Policy and the Budget](#), pages 9 - 11

The Scottish Government supports devolving further tax powers to the Scottish Parliament,⁵⁷ including taxes such as National Insurance and VAT, which would allow tax policy to be tailored as the Assembly proposes.

Most recently, the Scottish Government set out its position that the review of the arrangements for financing devolved government in Scotland (the “fiscal framework”), due to take place in early 2022, should consider these issues.⁵⁸ However, while both governments have agreed to a broad scope for the review, there has been no agreement yet that further tax powers will be discussed. The exact scope of the review is to be jointly agreed by both governments in the coming months.

⁵⁷ For example: [More Powers for the Scottish Parliament – Scottish Government Proposals \(webarchive.org.uk\)](#) (Oct 2014); [2015.06.15 DFM to Convener Beyond Smith Powers.pdf \(parliament.scot\)](#)

⁵⁸ [Tax Policy and the Budget](#), page 25

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The Scottish Government has published a **draft Framework for Tax**,⁵⁹ setting out the functions, principles and policy objectives that underpin how tax changes in Scotland are assessed and delivered. The draft Framework was informed by the work of the Citizens' Assembly:⁶⁰

[The draft Framework] embodies our ongoing commitment to, and vision for tax in Scotland; an approach that is underpinned by policy and delivery excellence, good practice, open government and transparency; and where tax policy is positioned to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

This is of fundamental importance to the people of Scotland, noting the vision for tax put forward by the Citizens' Assembly for Scotland:

Scotland should be a country where all taxes are simplified and made more proportionate so that everyone is taxed accordingly; taxation is transparent and understandable; measures are introduced to minimise tax avoidance: and companies are incentivised to adopt green values.

59 [Tax policy and the budget: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/tax-policy-and-the-budget-consultation-2021/pages/100.aspx) (Aug 2021)

60 Tax Policy and the Budget, page 7

The draft Framework includes the principles and strategic objectives, and a programme of work for this Parliament. Echoing the recommendation of the Assembly on **incentivising business**, the strategic objectives include helping to deliver a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery and support new, good jobs, businesses and industries for the future.⁶¹

The draft Framework also sets out **engagement, transparency and public understanding** as one of the six principles of good tax policy making.⁶²

Engagement: The public and businesses should understand the tax system and governments must be open and transparent about tax policies and their decision making, consulting widely. This is crucial for accountability and trust.

61 Tax Policy and the Budget, page 16

62 Tax Policy and the Budget, page 14

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Responding to the recommendations of the Assembly is identified as one of the purposes of consulting on the draft Framework:⁶³

Be open and transparent about how we approach tax policy. Responding to the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly, the Framework provides more information, in accessible language, on the purposes for collecting taxes; the principles that underpin our approach; our strategic objectives and our programme of work for this Parliament.

The recommendations of the Assembly on public **understanding of tax and how it is spent** have therefore directly informed the Scottish Government's approach to its tax policy, including developing Scotland's first Framework for Tax.

In addition, the Scottish Government is a member of the Open Government Partnership.⁶⁴ As part of this, the government is working on ways to enhance fiscal transparency, while making the Scottish Budget more accessible to the general public, including the use of social media. Ahead of the 2021-22 Scottish Budget announcement, for example, content on Scotland's taxes was created for the Scottish Government's Instagram and Facebook accounts, using the 'Stories' feature on both platforms.⁶⁵ The explainers on tax were designed to be clear and easy to understand. The Scottish Government is currently working with a range of partners to explore more accessible ways to communicate tax devolution and the links between taxes and public spending. For example, at the moment the government is working on an animated video project which involves representatives from; the Chartered Institute of Taxation, Fraser of Allander Institute, Scottish Parliament Education Centre, University of Edinburgh, and Glasgow Caledonian University.

63 Tax Policy and the Budget, page 2

64 [Scotland, United Kingdom \(opengovpartnership.org\)](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/)

65 Facebook story [The Scottish Government – What you should know about the Scottish Budget | Facebook](#)

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As the majority of tax powers remain reserved, **enforcement and compliance** remains a core responsibility of HM Revenue and Customs. However, the Scottish Government believes that **everyone should pay a fair share of tax** and supports strong measures to tackle tax avoidance and evasion. The government's principles of good tax policy making include enforcement:⁶⁶

Anti-avoidance: Taxes form part of the fabric of society and we should all be proud of the contribution they make. The tax system should therefore prevent avoidance practices and governments and tax authorities should work proactively, and respond quickly to tackle them.

Revenue Scotland, the tax authority with responsibility for the collection and management of Scotland's fully devolved taxes, has a duty to protect the revenue and ensure that the correct amount of tax is collected. This is done through encouraging a culture of responsible taxpaying, where individuals and businesses pay their taxes as the Scottish Parliament intended. Revenue Scotland is an open and transparent organisation and is committed to making much of its data available.⁶⁷

Revenue Scotland is also committed to making it as easy as possible for taxpayers to understand and comply with their obligations and pay the right amount of tax, while at the same time working to detect and deter non-compliance. Revenue Scotland works closely with its stakeholders and has a programme of work to improve their processes and guidance to make them as accessible as possible. Revenue Scotland's approach to compliance has three key elements:

- Enabling – helping taxpayers comply with their tax obligations

66 Tax Policy and the Budget, page 14

67 [Statistics | Revenue Scotland](#)

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- Assurance – helping taxpayers get to the right position
- Resolution – solving disputes, pursuing non-compliance and applying penalties where required.

A key feature of the Revenue Scotland and Tax Powers Act 2014 is the General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR) which allows Revenue Scotland to take counteraction against artificial tax avoidance schemes. This makes it difficult for people to circumvent the requirement to pay tax. The Scottish GAAR is significantly wider than the corresponding UK General Anti-Abuse Rule which is based on a narrower test of 'abuse' rather than 'artificiality'.

The Citizens' Assembly also recommended that there be **“a register of organisations which shows compliance with tax and employment measures” (recommendation 26)**. HMRC already publishes details of deliberate tax defaulters⁶⁸ and large businesses have to publish their tax strategy each financial year.

The Assembly's recommendations on enforcement demonstrate clearly the importance to citizens of individuals and organisations bearing their fair share of taxation, and reinforce the government's principle: “Taxes form part of the fabric of society and we should all be proud of the contribution they make.”

68 [Current list of deliberate tax defaulters – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

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The economy

The Assembly's recommendations on the economy focus on science and technology investment and skills (**recommendations 29 – 31**), and aiding Scotland's recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, concentrating on small and medium size businesses (**recommendation 32**).

The Programme for Government and the Covid Recovery Strategy set out the government's plans for supporting business and the economy to recover from the pandemic and shape the future of Scotland's economy. Both highlight the launch later this year of a 10-year **National Strategy for Economic Transformation**, overseen by a new Advisory Council to support Scotland's economic recovery.⁶⁹ The strategy will be published alongside criteria for a new National Challenge Competition which will provide up to £50 million to the projects with the greatest potential to transform Scotland's economy.

69 PfG, page 70; Covid Recovery Strategy, page 26

The Programme for Government sets out other specific measures the Scottish Government is taking on supporting science and technology in Scotland's economy, and encouraging careers in these sectors. These include:⁷⁰

- actioning key recommendations from the **review of the Scottish tech ecosystem**, backed by an initial £7 million funding for the programme
- launching the **Scottish Teachers Advancing Computing Science** to share best practice in Computing Science across all schools; working across all sectors of education to change perceptions about STEM and challenge assumptions about gender and wider inequalities⁷¹
- scaling up **support for digital adoption**, investing £100 million in digital support programmes over this Parliament

70 PfG, pages 79 – 81

71 PfG, page 54

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- **working with innovative businesses to solve challenges faced by the public sector** through CivTech operations, and funding delivery of innovative products and services across the public sector
- increasing **funding for research and development** to £100 million over this Parliament
- Working with the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board and other stakeholders to develop **a new innovation strategy** and supporting Scotland to become a **leading European space nation**.

The Programme for Government also sets out plans for technologies to support a just transition to net zero, including the £62 million **Energy Transition Fund** and the £180 million **Emerging Energy Technologies Fund**.⁷²

The Assembly emphasises science and technology in its recommendations on the economy, reinforcing the government's plans for investment in these areas, including green technologies, and to support and foster innovation and interest in careers.

The Covid Recovery Strategy recognises that the efforts of businesses will be central to its success and sets out measures to simplify investment in skills and training, embed fair work so increasing productivity, and enhancing equality of opportunity for all to access and progress in work, as well as setting out detailed measures to support the creation of new jobs and to support those moving into employment.

The Programme for Government also sets out specific steps to put local business and communities at the heart of economic recovery⁷³ for example maintaining the Small Business Bonus Scheme for the lifetime of the Parliament.

The measures set out in the Programme for Government reflect the recommendations of the Assembly, and the importance of small and medium size businesses to the recovery of local communities from the pandemic.



Key themes

4. Young people

“a strong focus on supporting young people to realise their potential, including support for their health and wellbeing, access to housing, skills development, employment and incomes”

‘Doing Politics Differently’



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Young people summary of recommendations



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[Recommendations 33 – 37 are themed as 'Young people'.](#)

These include proposals on the provision of mental health care services, the need for affordable accommodation and ensuring better employment opportunities for young people.

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It is significant that the Assembly identified a focus on young people as a specific theme in its recommendations. The transition from school or other education into adult life and work, and independent living, brings a range of challenges. Public services can seem focussed on school age young people and children, or provided generally for the adult population as a whole.

The pandemic has highlighted the issues that face young people. There has also been a particularly severe impact on young people, whether in education, transition from education into work, or in employment in sectors badly affected by the pandemic and the measures taken to counter it.

The Programme for Government⁷⁴ and Covid Recovery Strategy⁷⁵ set out the steps the government is taking to support young people and address the effects of the pandemic.

⁷⁴ PfG, Chapter 2 and pages 72-73

⁷⁵ Covid Recovery Strategy, Chapter 4

On apprenticeships and training

(recommendations 35) the government has set out plans for the **Young Person's Guarantee**⁷⁶ which gives every young person who wants it the opportunity to study, take up an apprenticeship, job or work experience, or participate in formal volunteering. The government is providing a further £70 million this year for the Young Person's Guarantee, which, combined with £60 million for 2020/21, will aim to support at least 24,000 new and enhanced opportunities, across a range of sectors and projects. This includes 11,000 employment, education and training opportunities through local employability partnerships, 9,000 additional places in colleges and 2,600 opportunities for vulnerable and care experienced young people. In addition, the funding will connect over 1,000 disabled young people to fair work, education and activities designed to ensure a successful transition into adult life and work, and support up to 500 graduate level placements of between 6 and 12 months to support progression into sustainable, graduate level employment. Apprenticeships are a key part of the Young Person's Guarantee; the government will maximise apprenticeship opportunities, building back up to 30,000 starts and assess demand to see how much further to go.

⁷⁶ PfG, page 73; Covid Recovery Strategy, page 21



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On **opportunities for young people to access extra-curricular activities, including sports and the arts (recommendation 37)**, the Programme for Government sets out plans to:

- double **investment in sport and active living to £100 million a year**⁷⁷ by the end of the Parliament, ensuring more people can enjoy active lives in the recovery, improving physical, mental and social health
- ensure that **Active Schools** programmes are free for all children and young people by the end of this Parliament, to provide opportunities for more children and young people to take part in sport before, during and after school
- invest in cultural and creative programmes, including **Systema Scotland** and the **Youth Music Initiative**, which help young people grow confidently as citizens, foster wellbeing and support attainment⁷⁸

77 PfG, page 31

78 PfG, page 107

On **young people's mental health (recommendation 33)**,

the Programme for Government sets out a range of measures on mental health services, including a commitment to work with health boards to ensure at least 1% of all frontline NHS spend goes on **Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)** by the end of this Parliament as well as increasing the availability of preventative and early intervention services.⁷⁹ In 2021-22 an additional £40 million has been allocated from the £120 million Mental Health Recovery and Renewal fund for CAMHS. The Covid Recovery Strategy also commits to provide an additional £15 million to local authorities in 2021-22 to deliver locally-based mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people aged 5 to 24, and to developing a Student Mental Health Action Plan.⁸⁰

On **affordable housing (recommendation 34)**, the Programme for Government sets out the government's long-term housing strategy [Housing to 2040](#)⁸¹ and current plans, including delivering 110,000 **affordable homes** across Scotland by 2032, with at least 70% for social rented sector and 10% in remote, rural and island

79 PfG, pages 24-26

80 Covid Recovery Strategy, page 19

81 [Housing to 2040 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/housing-to-2040)

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communities.⁸² The policy is not targeted by age so it will benefit young people along with others in the community. Also relevant to this recommendation are the government's measures to tackle **homelessness** and rough sleeping and the forthcoming **Rented Sector Strategy**, including a national system of rent controls and a new deal for tenants. Specifically for young people, there will be a rent guarantor for estranged young people and legislation will exempt young people from Council Tax until they reach the age of 22.

Another specific recommendation is to **raise the minimum wage for young people aged 16-24 to a national living wage (recommendation 36)**. This is currently a reserved matter, and the Scottish Government supports the devolution of powers over employment law, including the minimum wage, to the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government is fully committed to promoting Fair Work practices throughout Scotland and will continue to press the UK Government for the full set of powers around employment law to allow the government to fully deliver its Fair Work ambitions. Furthermore, the government has encouraged the abolition of the apprentice rate and a move towards the 'real' Living Wage of £9.50 per hour for all workers.

82 PfG, pages 93-96

The recommendations of the Assembly on young people call for the needs of this group to be considered in a more integrated way. There is already work across government to support **care experienced young people**,⁸³ aligning work in health, education, justice, care, communities and the economy.⁸⁴ There is also a commitment to develop a **School Leavers' Toolkit** providing practical information about budgeting and finances, as well as guidance for school leavers on how to exercise their full democratic rights as citizens.⁸⁵

To follow up the work of the Assembly and its recommendations on young people, and to ensure young people have a full voice in the issues that affect them, the government will introduce a brand new **Citizens' Assembly for under 16s**, so that the generation who will grow up with the consequences of the decisions taken now can be involved in making them.⁸⁶

83 [#KeepThePromise - The Promise](#)

84 PfG, page 47

85 PfG, page 38

86 PfG, page 106

Key themes

5. Sustainability

“improving Scotland’s
environmental sustainability,
including through
technological innovation
and use of taxes”

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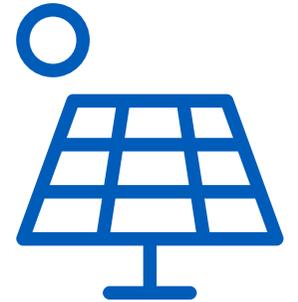
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[Recommendations 38 – 42 are themed as 'Sustainability'.](#)

These include proposals for reducing non-biodegradable waste, incentivising businesses to participate in a green recovery from Covid and initiatives to invest in energy infrastructure and support energy efficiency in the home.

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The Assembly's recommendations on sustainability are now complemented by the work of **Scotland's Climate Assembly**.⁸⁷ Scotland's Climate Assembly reported in June 2021, making 81 policy recommendations.⁸⁸ The Scottish Government will respond in line with the requirements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act, within six months of the publication of the recommendations.⁸⁹

Scotland's Climate Assembly itself drew on lessons of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland in its establishment and the conduct of its business. Both assemblies have demonstrated the potential of doing politics differently through direct participation by citizens in the democratic and policy making process.

87 [Welcome to Scotland's Climate Assembly | Climate Assembly](#)

88 [Scotland's Climate Assembly Recommendations for Action.WebVersion \(2\) \(2\).pdf](#)

89 [S6W-00981 | Scottish Parliament Website](#)

The Scottish Government is taking actions on the priorities identified in the Assembly's recommendations on sustainability as part of wider initiatives to help end Scotland's contribution to climate change, restore nature and enhance climate resilience, in a just and fair way.⁹⁰

On the **banning of non-biodegradable products and support for recycling (recommendation 38)**, the government plans:⁹¹

- to introduce regulations before the end of this year to end the supply and manufacture in Scotland **of certain single use plastic items**
- first investments from the £70 million **Recycling Improvement Fund** and collaboration with industry, local government and environmental groups to develop a route map to achieving its targets to 2025 and beyond including fiscal incentives (**recommendation 41**)
- a **Circular Economy Bill**, helping develop an economy which reduces demand for raw materials, designs products to last as long as possible and encourages reuse, repair and recycling

90 PfG, Chapter 3

91 PfG, page 67



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- a £2 million **Textile Innovation Fund** to address issues associated with textile waste and throwaway culture
- the UK's first ever national **Deposit Return Scheme** to increase the amount and quality of drinks container material being recycled

On **public information and awareness raising (recommendation 39)**, the government has **launched a new campaign, #LetsDoNetZero**, highlighting the benefits a net zero society will bring for the economy, health, and environment, and the transformation required across all sectors of the economy and society.⁹² The domestic campaign provides information and resources to support the steps all can take to reduce emissions, and an international campaign demonstrates Scotland's global leadership.⁹³

The Scottish Government has extensive plans for investing in the infrastructure and technology for **renewable energy resources (recommendation 40)** as part of a just transition to net zero. These include:⁹⁴

92 PfG, page 59

93 [Home | Net Zero Nation](#)

94 PfG, pages 61-64

- a **National Public Energy Agency**, with a remit to accelerate transformational change in energy use in homes and buildings, aiding public understanding and awareness, and coordinating delivery of investment
- a five year **Hydrogen Action Plan**, setting out actions to support Scottish supply chain activity and drive the development of a low-cost hydrogen capability
- investing £60 million to support **decarbonising the industrial sector** in a just and fair way
- a £26 million **Low Carbon Manufacturing Challenge Fund** to help manufacturing businesses decarbonise
- a £34 million **Scottish Industrial Energy Transformation Fund** enabling direct action to reduce carbon or save energy
- an **Energy Transition Scotland** programme, including the £62 million Energy Transition Fund, which is already funding key transition projects, and the £180 million Emerging Energy Technologies Fund to support the development of hydrogen and carbon capture and storage

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- a **Scottish Offshore Wind Strategic Investment Assessment** and a new **Onshore Wind Policy Statement** to follow in 2022
- subject to consultation, securing between 8 and 12GW of **installed onshore wind** by 2030, with ambitions for up to 11GW of offshore wind; successful bidders in the first round of offshore seabed leasing, ScotWind⁹⁵ will be announced in 2022 – this could generate up to £860 million in revenue for Scotland, 10GW of wind power, and billions of investment over the next 20 years

There are also a range of plans to address **the energy efficiency of homes (recommendation 42)**. The Heat in Buildings Strategy⁹⁶ sets out an ambitious policy package to ensure that by 2045 heating homes and buildings no longer contribute to climate change. The package includes plans to invest at least £1.8 billion over this Parliament in decarbonising homes and buildings, putting Scotland on course to convert at least 1 million homes and 50,000 non-domestic buildings to low or zero-emission heating by 2030, and for

95 [ScotWind – Our projects – Crown Estate Scotland](#)

96 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/heat-buildings-strategy-achieving-net-zero-emissions-scotlands-buildings/>

all homes to reach a good standard of energy efficiency by 2033. Other measures include:⁹⁷ cashback for homeowners who take out a loan to install green heating systems or eligible energy efficiency measures; an additional £18 million for the Warmer Homes Scotland programme targeted at those in fuel poverty, taking the total budget to £50 million this year; and support for green heating and energy efficiency projects in social housing.

Echoing the Assembly's recommendations on public information, the government will deliver a public communication programme to raise awareness of the support and advice available, and encourage home upgrades.

The Assembly's recommendations on sustainability demonstrate again public support for urgent measures to tackle the climate emergency, and to allow all citizens to make their own contribution to saving and improving the environment, and reinforce the government's commitment to achieve these ends.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Scottish Government response to **Doing Politics Differently**

Key themes

6. Health and wellbeing



**“a strong focus on
prioritising mental health,
improving health promotion,
on NHS governance,
increasing the wages
for healthcare staff and
a focus on community health”**

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[Recommendations 43 - 49](#) are themed as 'Health and wellbeing'. These proposals have a strong focus on the NHS, including: staff pay; governance, continued public ownership and operation of the NHS; the need for community health care hubs; and also for greater mental health care provision.

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Recovery from the pandemic provides the context for the government's plans on health, well-being and social care. The NHS Scotland Recovery Plan⁹⁸ commits to more than £1 billion of targeted investment for the recovery and renewal of the health service. The Programme for Government sets out further plans for investment in the NHS – increasing by 20% over this Parliament⁹⁹ – and the establishment of a National Care Service, the biggest reform of health and social care since the founding of the NHS.¹⁰⁰

Within the overall plans for recovery and strengthening health and care services, there are measures to delivering priorities identified by the Assembly. These include:

- on **NHS pay (recommendation 44)** within a week of the recent election, the Scottish Government implemented a 4% pay raise for Agenda for Change staff, backdated to December 2020; there was also a 3% increase for NHS medical and dental staff, in recognition of their efforts during the pandemic, backdated to April 2021¹⁰¹

98 [NHS recovery plan – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/nhs-recovery-plan)

99 PfG, pages 19-26

100 PfG, pages 26-28

101 PfG, page 23

- on **community healthcare hubs (recommendation 47)** half of annual frontline spending will be invested in community health services by the end of this Parliament¹⁰²
- on **health promotion and information on services (recommendations 43)** to redesign the system around the individual, a refreshed digital health and care strategy will be published soon where digital care will be scaled up and a safe and secure digital app will be developed to support people to access information and services directly;¹⁰³ the government also plans a range of measures for promoting wellbeing and active, healthy lifestyles, such as reducing smoking and alcohol consumption, and encouraging sport and active living¹⁰⁴

102 PfG, page 20

103 PfG, pages 23-24

104 PfG, pages 30-31

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On **mental health care (recommendation 49)** the government has set out plans for the recovery and development of mental health services¹⁰⁵ and has worked to support the mental wellbeing of the people of Scotland throughout the pandemic through the Clear Your Head campaign.¹⁰⁶ A range of activity to deliver these plans is being supported by an additional £120 million Mental Health Recovery and Renewal Fund. This includes a new £15 million Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund,¹⁰⁷ which was launched in October to support adult community-based initiatives across Scotland which promote good mental health for all, early intervention for those in distress and tackle the impact of social isolation, loneliness and the mental health inequalities made worse by the pandemic. The government recognises the value added to policy and service design by incorporating the views and experiences of people who have lived and living experience of using services, as well as their families and carers. Opportunities for this kind of positive participation are built into work on mental health including through the development of a national lived experience panel.

105 PfG, pages 24-26

106 [Home | clearyourhead.scot](https://www.gov.scot/clearyourhead)

107 [£15 million to help improve mental wellbeing – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/clearyourhead)

The Assembly also made three recommendations on the management and public perception of the NHS:

- people are informed of how much the NHS costs at an individual level to build a sense of value and respect (**recommendation 45**)
- there is a higher proportion of medically trained staff and community members of management boards (**recommendation 46**)
- there is transparency about private companies' involvement in the NHS "to overcome the challenges of creeping privatisation" (**recommendation 48**)

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In line with the recommendations of the Assembly, **Scotland's Health Boards** already comprise a mix of Executive and Non-Executive members, with Executive members appointed because of their professional expertise. This includes, for example, the medical and nurse director, both of whom are professionally qualified members of staff. Health Boards need to be representative of the communities they serve, and the people of Scotland, and this is the role of Non-Executive Members, ordinary members of the public who are appointed following a recruitment process regulated by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Scotland. Similarly, the Scottish Government remains absolutely committed to a **publicly owned and operated NHS**. However, there are no plans to produce individual level indications of the cost of the NHS as these would depend on the use made of the service by people according to their individual needs. The health service is intended to provide the health care required by people, free at the point of delivery, whatever these are and whatever their circumstances.

These recommendations of the Assembly, especially those on privatisation and rewards for its staff, demonstrate again the value placed on the NHS by the people of Scotland, a value reinforced by its efforts during the pandemic. There is always a need for improvement and development, but the government shares the Assembly's view of the crucial role the NHS plays in Scotland's society.



Key themes

7. Further powers



“including a range of recommendations around tax powers, to negotiate own trade agreements and control immigration law, as well as other recommendations that do not explicitly reference constitutional change but which have constitutional implications, for example, around green tax breaks, reducing the pension age and around employment laws”

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[Recommendations 50 – 54 are themed as 'Further powers'.](#)
These recommendations are all concerned with areas of policy which are at present fully or partly reserved to the UK Government but which the Citizens' Assembly recommends should be devolved to the Scottish Government and Parliament. These policy areas include: taxation; trade and industry; employment; and immigration.

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The Scottish Government has published a range of proposals for further devolution of responsibilities to Scotland. Most recently, following the vote to leave the EU in 2016, the Scottish Government produced proposals to mitigate the effects of withdrawal for both Scotland and the UK as a whole,¹⁰⁸ including the enhanced powers needed for the Scottish Parliament to balance the UK Government's assertions of Westminster sovereignty.

However, the approach of the UK Government since 2016 has been to constrain and undermine, rather than enhance, the responsibilities of the devolved institutions of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.¹⁰⁹ The Scottish Government does not believe the UK Government is likely to engage in discussions on the proposals made by Citizens' Assembly for further devolution, however well-reasoned or well supported these may be. The Scottish Government will, nonetheless, press the case for further devolution with the UK Government and encourage public debate on these proposals.

108 [Scotland's Place in Europe – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Scotland's-Place-in-Europe)

109 For further details see [After Brexit: The UK Internal Market Act and devolution – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/After-Brexit-The-UK-Internal-Market-Act-and-devolution)

On **tax (recommendations 50 and 52)**, The Scottish Government has published proposals for devolution of further tax powers to the Scottish Parliament,¹¹⁰ including taxes such as National Insurance (employers and employees contributions) and corporation tax. Further devolution of powers for green taxes could help change behaviour supporting the transition to a net zero economy. Most recently, the Scottish Government proposed to the UK Government that the current review of the arrangements for financing devolved government in Scotland (the “fiscal framework”) considered these issues.¹¹¹ However, there seems little realistic prospect of the current UK Government agreeing to the devolution of further tax powers to Scotland.

110 For example: [More Powers for the Scottish Parliament – Scottish Government Proposals \(webarchive.org.uk\)](http://web.archive.org/More-Powers-for-the-Scottish-Parliament-Scottish-Government-Proposals) (Oct 2014); [2015.06.15 DFM to Convener Beyond Smith Powers.pdf \(parliament.scot\)](http://parliament.scot/2015.06.15-DFM-to-Convener-Beyond-Smith-Powers.pdf)

111 [Tax Policy and the Budget](#), page 25

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On a **four day week (recommendation 51)**, the Scottish Government has long supported the devolution of employment law to the Scottish Parliament, especially as EU exit has now removed important safeguards from workers.¹¹² Within current devolved powers, the government will establish a £10 million pilot fund to support companies explore the benefits of a 4-day working week.¹¹³

112 [Scotland's Place in Europe \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot), Chapter 4

113 PfG, page 75

On **international trade negotiations (recommendation 53)**, the government has again published detailed proposals for a greater involvement for Scotland in negotiating international trade deals.¹¹⁴ Within the current devolution settlement, the government has set out its ambitions for Scotland as a trading nation¹¹⁵ and plans to enhance Scotland's economy and international competitiveness.¹¹⁶ The **Vision for Trade**¹¹⁷ will ensure decisions related to trade are aligned with the government's values and that trade supports the economic recovery. The Inward Investment Plan¹¹⁸ is focused on attracting sustainable values-led investment that matches ambitions for Scotland, helping achieve a Net Zero, Fair Work, and Wellbeing Economy.

114 [Scotland's role in the development of future UK trade arrangements - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

115 [A Trading Nation - A plan for growing Scotland's exports](http://www.gov.scot)

116 [Investing with Purpose - Global Capital Investment Plan](http://www.gov.scot)

117 [Trade: our vision - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

118 [Shaping Scotland's economy: inward investment plan - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

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Immigration (recommendation 54) has long been a priority for further devolution to Scotland, especially following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.¹¹⁹ Again there seems no prospect of the current UK Government considering the detailed proposals that have been published, nor engaging with the differing circumstances and needs for migration in Scotland. Within current powers, the government will build on the **Stay in Scotland** campaign, providing advice and support to EU citizens, and develop a Migration Service for Scotland to support those who have chosen to make Scotland their home.¹²⁰ The government has also committed to refresh and expand the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy¹²¹ and to help support local authorities to accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking children arriving in Scotland.

The Assembly's recommendations on further powers have identified areas that the Scottish Government also considers the highest priority for enhancing the responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament within the UK: tax, employment, migration and international trade. The government believes that withdrawal from the EU has made the argument for these powers stronger and more urgent, and the recommendations of the Assembly reinforce this view.

119 [Migration: helping Scotland prosper – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)

120 PfG, page 109

121 [New Scots: refugee integration strategy 2018 to 2022 – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)



Key themes

8. Mixed group

“a range of other recommendations such as education and vocational opportunities, equal internet access and a review of the criminal justice system”

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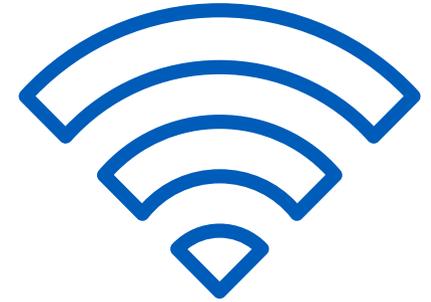
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Mixed group summary of recommendations



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[Recommendations 55 – 60 are themed as 'Mixed group'.](#)

Proposals in this group include those concerning: internet connectivity; the criminal justice system; and access to lifelong education.

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The recommendations in this section show the range of issues that were of concern to the Assembly in considering the broad questions they had been asked to consider. The government's programme is similarly wide ranging in its nature, and there are policy initiatives underway in most of the areas identified by the Assembly.

On **digital connectivity (recommendation 55)**¹²² the government remains committed to providing support to ensure that everyone can access superfast broadband services by the end of 2021. By the end of this Parliament, Connecting Scotland will have supported up to 300,000 households to get online, backed by £200 million of investment, through the provision of devices, data and digital skills. In addition, over the course of this Parliament, the Scottish Government will provide a digital device for every school-aged child – helping an estimated 700,000 children by 2026.¹²³

122 PfG, pages 78-79

123 PfG, page 43

On the **state pension age and enforcement by employers (recommendation 57)** this is an area fully reserved to the UK Government. The Scottish Government is opposed to further increases in the state pension age.

On the recommendations of the **Social Renewal Advisory Board**¹²⁴ (**recommendation 58**), the government published its initial response in March,¹²⁵ welcoming the Board's report, and providing a brief overview of progress. 69 of the 77 recommendations are now being progressed either in part or in full, including the transformational recommendations on exploring a Minimum Income Guarantee and increasing the Scottish Child Payment. The government will continue to build on the Calls to Action through the COVID Recovery Strategy, sharpen the focus on reducing poverty and disadvantage and embed a human-rights approach.¹²⁶

124 [If not now, when? – Social Renewal Advisory Board report: January 2021 – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

125 [Social Renewal Advisory Board: our response – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

126 Covid Recovery Strategy, page 13

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On a **full review of the justice system** to improve outcomes for communities, offenders and victims (**recommendation 59**), the government plans targeted reforms to address specific issues, building on the solid foundations of Scotland's justice system.¹²⁷ Planned measures include:

- a new National Community Justice Strategy with an emphasis on early intervention and a further shift away from the use of custody
- a new funding programme to provide practical and emotional support to victims, survivors and witnesses of crime
- consideration of the three verdict system, the rule on corroboration and the role of Scotland's law officers

127 PfG, pages 100-103

On **educational opportunities for people at all stages of life and a voluntary national service scheme (recommendation 60)**, the government supports a number of programmes that provide learning opportunities from school onwards, including:

- £1 billion across this Parliament for the Scottish Attainment Challenge¹²⁸
- maintain the policy of no tuition fees for Scottish students and substantial reforms to student support¹²⁹
- Young Person's Guarantee – giving every young person who wants it the opportunity of a job, place in education or training, or formal volunteering¹³⁰
- a Green Jobs Workforce Academy for those looking to transition into green jobs¹³¹

128 PfG, pages 41-45

129 PfG, pages 45-46

130 PfG, pages 72-73

131 PfG, page 72

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- support for adult upskilling and reskilling through the Flexible Workforce Development Fund and Individual Training Accounts¹³²
- assessing how to simplify and strengthen the lifelong learning offer and ensure every adult who needs access to funding to support skills development throughout their lives has it¹³³

The remaining recommendation of the Assembly (**recommendation 56**) is that the Scottish Government and Parliament should

legislate upon clear and simple standards and ways of working (for example, IT and public information systems) to improve collaboration, accessibility and communication locally and nationally, which achieves cost efficiencies, and streamlines services and working practices across both private and public organisations to ensure they are understood by all and run for the benefit of citizens.

This recommendation returns to a common theme across the report: accessible and comprehensible information available to citizens to allow them both to participate in the affairs of the country and to hold to account organisations, public and private, for their activities. The government always aims to provide information in a form that can be accessed and used by citizens. This recommendation is a reminder that those attempts are not always successful, and there is always more to be done to encourage and support fully participative, active citizens in a healthy and functioning democracy.

132 PfG, page 71

133 PfG, page 71; see also the Fair Work principles – [Fair Work First: guidance – gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fair-work-first/guidance/pages/11.aspx)

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This response has set out three main legacies from the report of the first Citizens' Assembly of Scotland:

- demonstrating the potential of the Citizens' Assembly model to consider complex issues and make recommendations built on deliberation and finding areas of broad agreement
- specific themes and recommendations for action in the areas the Assembly identified as its priorities
- its overall vision and ambition for Scotland, including the full involvement of citizens in the democratic process, with transparent, accessible information and institutions

The Scottish Government has already used the assembly model for Scotland's Climate Assembly and has set out its intentions for further participative democracy, including plans for Citizens' Assemblies.

This response sets out current plans for the themes and specific recommendations. The government can be held accountable, by the Parliament, public and former members of the Assembly for its progress both in delivering this programme and in acting on the Assembly's proposals, now and going forward.

Realising the vision and empowering citizens goes beyond immediate plans and the government alone. The next steps will include working with the Scottish Parliament and others, including the public, to address these central recommendations in the Assembly's report. The aim of this work must be to ensure that democratic institutions are properly connected and engaged with the people of Scotland, and to secure a lasting legacy of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland: **to do politics differently.**

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Costs of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland

The final cost of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland was **£0.938 million** over two financial years.

In November 2019 the Scottish Ministers committed to provide a budget of £1.37 million to the Citizens' Assembly across both financial years that it would be sitting. The final cost of the Citizens' Assembly was £0.432 million below the original budget.

The original budget for the Citizens' Assembly included six in-person meetings. Due to public health restrictions related to the Covid pandemic, the Assembly met only four times in-person before moving to work online. This is the primary reason why Citizens' Assembly was delivered under budget. Further savings were made because Secretariat staff worked from home from March 2020 and office accommodation was no longer required.

Following the postponement of the work of Citizens' Assembly in March 2020 the Assembly was relaunched, working online, in August 2020. A revised budget of £0.288 million for completion of the remaining work was agreed. The revised budget, taken alongside costs to that date, was well below the original budget for the Assembly.



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This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-80201-492-1 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, November 2021

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS925406 (11/21)

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