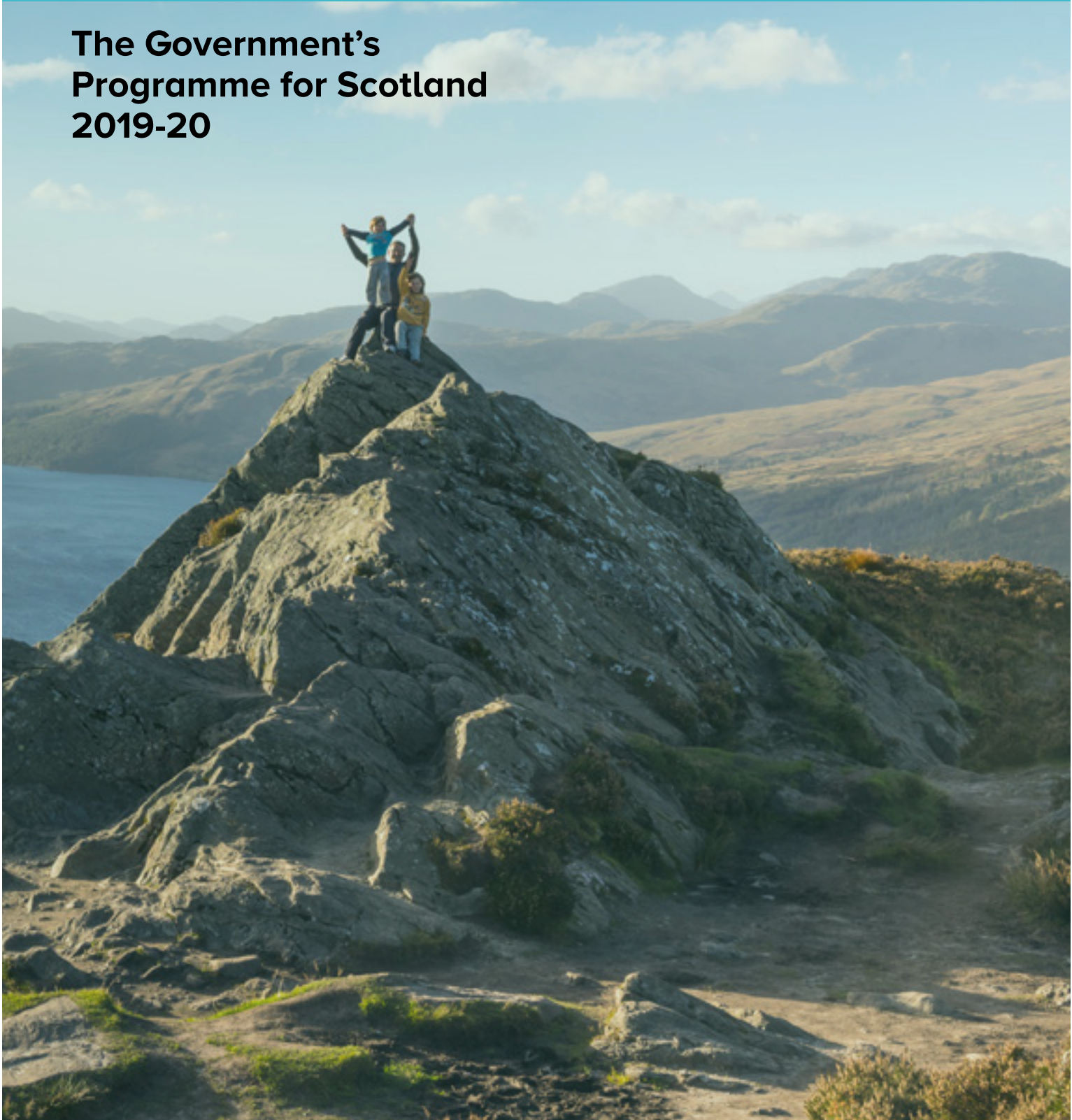




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PROTECTING SCOTLAND'S FUTURE

**The Government's
Programme for Scotland
2019-20**



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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola Sturgeon". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister of Scotland

INTRODUCTION FROM THE FIRST MINISTER

We are currently living through unprecedented and deeply troubling times for Scotland and the UK. At a time when we are wrestling with global challenges such as the climate emergency, we also face a constitutional emergency as the current UK Government undermines democracy by suspending the UK Parliament and taking Scotland out of the European Union (EU) against our will and possibly without a deal.

The people of Scotland voted to remain in the EU and this Government has consistently opposed Brexit. A 'no deal' Brexit would create unprecedented challenges for the government and for the wider country – it would put jobs, livelihoods and communities at risk.

As a Government our opposition to a 'no deal' Brexit is clear, but we are obliged to prepare for one. That means that if the UK Government does not step back from the brink, some elements of this Programme may have to be postponed while we deal with a mess that is not of Scotland's making.

We will seek to minimise any impact on the day-to-day activity of government but compromises may be required. However, this will not in any way diminish our ambitions for Scotland and this Programme sets those out.

The current political and constitutional crisis also raises the importance of securing the right for Scotland to have a say over our own future. As the decisions of the UK Government increasingly go against the interests and democratic wishes of the people of Scotland, it is more important than ever that we complete the necessary steps to hold a referendum on independence.

In April this year, I acknowledged that we faced a climate emergency. Over this summer, the evidence of that has been clear – we have seen the kind of extreme weather events across Europe that will become more and more common if we fail to rise to this global challenge. The consequences of global climate change will be severe. While in some parts of the world its effects are existential, we will also feel the impact here at home. We must act.

This Programme for Government sets out some of the next steps on Scotland's journey to net zero emissions and raises our ambition in light of the emergency we face. We are leading the world in setting challenging targets, but we must also redouble our efforts to meet them.

Tackling climate change also creates opportunities. We can lead the way in showing how our society and economy can transition to net zero in a way that creates economic opportunity and provides the assurance of rewarding work for all.

If we are able to proceed as planned, the coming parliamentary year will see several key milestones on the path to setting out Scotland's comprehensive response to the climate emergency. The Infrastructure Commission will publish its recommendations in advance of the Capital Spending Review. This will give us the opportunity to bring a low or zero carbon focus to all of our future infrastructure investments. Along with the renewal of the National Planning Framework, our future public infrastructure programme will lay the foundations on which we will build low and zero carbon homes, communities and industries. The National Transport Strategy, to be published later this year, will redefine investment priorities, putting sustainable transport at the heart of decision-making. In the year ahead, we will also publish an updated Climate Change Plan to take full account of the advice of the UK Committee on Climate Change.

The coming together of these fundamental reviews of government activity will mean changes in the way that we travel, live and grow our economy. By embracing these changes, we can reduce our emissions, become a driver of innovation and provide support to our communities to navigate these changes.

Of course, climate change is happening as we speak and it is something that we must all contribute to tackling now. In advance of the outcome of these reviews, this Programme for Government contains the first package of additional measures that we will take in response to the climate emergency. These measures cut across all parts of government but they are by no means the final word – instead they should be seen as a down-payment on our commitment to ensure that Scotland ends its contribution to global climate change by 2045 at the latest.

Amongst other elements this embryonic Scottish Green Deal includes commitments to:

- invest over £500 million in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage
- put the Highlands and Islands on a path to becoming the world's first net zero aviation region by 2040, including a commitment to zero emissions from Highland and Islands Airports Limited's operations. We will begin trials of low or zero emission flights in 2021
- reduce emissions from Scotland's railways to zero by 2035 through the continued electrification of the network, the procurement of battery-powered trains and exploration of the potential of hydrogen-powered trains in Scotland
- provide an additional £17 million to support the demand for ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) through our Low Carbon Transport Loan scheme, while expanding the scheme to include used electric vehicles

- ensure that from 2024, all new homes must use renewable or low carbon heat. This will be achieved through a fundamental overhaul in building regulations that will increase energy efficiency and the efficiency of construction from 2021, and will be accompanied by a £30 million investment in renewable heat projects
- put the transition to net zero at the heart of the Scottish National Investment Bank's work
- unlock additional resource for emissions-reducing investment through a Green Growth Accelerator – referred to by the Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG) as a 'Green City Deal' – combining public and private investment to transform cities and regions
- bring to market a £3 billion portfolio of projects, including renewables, waste and construction, ready for green finance investment
- support Scotland's people to gain the skills they need to share the rewards of these new approaches to investment through a Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan

Protecting the environment and ensuring a just transition to a net zero future is part of our commitment to put wellbeing at the heart of all we do as a Government.

Improving economic growth is important but we must generate it in a way that reduces inequality, improves quality of life and supports and benefits everyone in society.

Doing so against the backdrop of Brexit increases the challenge we face but it does not reduce our determination to deliver.

Scotland has long faced a problem of persistent and often multi-generational poverty. Child poverty, while lower than in other parts of the UK, is a particular challenge. The UK Government's austerity programme, including severe welfare cuts, is making this problem worse.

The Scottish Government has put tough targets to reduce child poverty in law and this year we will take bold steps to meet them.

We will bring forward regulations so that we can introduce our new Scottish Child Payment of £10 per week.

This Programme for Government commits to commencing payments to eligible families with children under the age of six by Christmas 2020 – ahead of the schedule we set out before the Summer Recess. The Scottish Child Payment will be paid to all eligible families with children up to 16 years of age by 2022. This game-changing investment will put over £500 a year, for each child, in the pockets of families who need it the most and has the potential to lift 30,000 children out of poverty.

The year ahead will also see the full expansion of early learning and childcare to 30 hours per week (1140 hours a year) for all 3 and 4 year olds, and for 2 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds. Alongside this expansion, we will also intensify our work to raise attainment in schools with more support for young people with additional support needs and the extension of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

We also continue our work to widen access to our world class universities and work with both them and colleges to further improve their collaboration with business and for us all to benefit from their ground-breaking and often world-leading research.

Later this month, we will also confirm the first wave of new schools that will be constructed through our £1 billion school investment programme. This will see more schools that are low emission, digitally-enabled and better connected to their local communities. Recognising the impact of the recent fire at Woodmill High School in Dunfermline, we will work in partnership with Fife Council to ensure Woodmill is re-built as quickly as possible.

Together with the introduction of the Best Start Grant over the last year and continued delivery of Scotland's Baby Box, these new commitments will make a valuable contribution to ensuring that Scotland is the best place to grow up.

We will also build on the commitments in last year's Programme for Government which set out a comprehensive package of measures to improve mental health services for children, young people and adults. We have published recommendations to drive up standards of perinatal and infant mental healthcare, supported by £50 million of funding. This academic year sees the first tranche of new school counsellors starting work to support our children and young people in their communities, with all in place by next September. Going forward we will see further progress as we develop community-based mental health services for children and young people. This will use an open access model, allowing referrals to be made by those who work with and support children and young people. Crucially, children and young people will be able to self-refer to the service. We will also scope out how this service can be made available in the future to people of all ages across Scotland.

Our services are changing but the rise in suicides this year shows that there is more to be done. Last year, we established a National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group to help drive change. In the coming year, we will support local suicide prevention planning and help more staff to work with those in crisis and those who have been bereaved by suicide.

The recent statistics showing a rise in the numbers of drugs deaths in Scotland means that we must act urgently. Accordingly, this Programme for Government commits us to invest a further £20 million over two years to support local services and provide targeted support. We will also continue to press the UK Government to act on medically-supervised overdose prevention facilities or to devolve the powers to enable the Scottish Government to do so.

This Programme also continues record investment in our NHS and includes over £100 million to support implementation of the Waiting Times Improvement Plan to eliminate unacceptable waits.

Social Security Scotland is already providing £190 million of vital support to over 91,000 people including carers and young families. Over the coming year, it will deliver a new Job Start Payment, the Young Carer Grant, Disability Assistance for Children and Young People and, this month, the Funeral Support Payment.

These investments are not possible without a strong economy that generates the jobs and wealth for us all to benefit from. We will continue our work to transform Scotland's infrastructure, support our innovators and expand our exports.

This will include a £130 million investment this year as part of the establishment of the Scottish National Investment Bank. The Bank will work with partners from across our economy to deliver investment, with the transition to net zero its primary mission.

We will also put in place a Foreign Direct Investment Growth Plan to confirm Scotland's place as one of the most attractive places to do business, particularly for low carbon industries. We are also investing a further £37 million in business research and development (R&D) to support innovation and make progress towards our target of doubling business R&D investment by 2025.

The Programme also builds on our reforms to the justice system and our commitment to human rights. A new Hate Crime Bill will bring criminal law up-to-date in this important area. We will also continue our improvements to forensic services for victims of sexual offences. And we will deliver changes recommended by the Victims Taskforce which has already supported improvements in how victims experience prison and parole processes.

The National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership will continue its work to establish a legislative framework for a Scottish Bill of Rights. This will be preceded, by the end of this Parliament, by legislation to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We will also consult on the detail of draft legislation to bring Scotland's process of Gender Recognition in line with international best practice.

It is worth noting that this is our fourth Programme for Government since the referendum on EU membership. Even in June 2016, no one would have predicted that we would begin this parliamentary year facing a 'no deal' Brexit, with the Westminster Parliament suspended.

The Scottish Government not only has a duty to prepare for a 'no deal' Brexit, but we also have an obligation to speak up loudly and clearly against the actions that are being taken in our name.

The Scottish Government will continue to work with others in Scotland, the Welsh Government and people and parties across the UK to do all we can to prevent a damaging Brexit of any kind.

As long as a 'no deal' Brexit remains a risk, we will do everything we can to ensure that we are as prepared as we can be, while being honest that we cannot prevent all the damage that it will cause, nor avoid some impact on the other business of government.

While much of the responsibility for mitigating the impact of a 'no deal' Brexit lies with the UK Government, we and our public sector partners have undertaken significant work and contingency planning for the effects of a hard Brexit right across our economy and public services and we will continue to do so.

However, regardless of what happens over the next few months, the last three years have shown us that Scotland's interests are not best served by Westminster government.

The Scottish Government is therefore preparing to allow the people of Scotland to choose the future that is best for our country.

We have a clear democratic mandate, won in the 2016 Holyrood election, to offer the choice of independence in this Parliament – and we intend to do so. A majority of MSPs support an independence referendum within this Parliament. Accordingly, we have introduced the Referendums Bill which sets out the way future referendums will be run. We will seek agreement to a transfer of power during the passage of the Bill to enable an independence referendum that is beyond challenge to be held. It would be contrary to basic democratic principles for the UK Government to attempt to block such a referendum.

As part of enabling people to debate what kind of future they want and to ensure they have all the information they need, we have established an independent Citizens' Assembly to create a non-partisan space for such discussions to take place. We have also invited all parties to engage in discussions about what further powers they believe the Scottish Parliament needs to address the challenges that have emerged as a result of the Brexit debate.

This Programme for Government shows the ambition we have for Scotland. It sets out the progressive actions we can take to make our country the best place in the world to grow up, learn, work and live in. Our vision is of a place where a parent's income does not dictate a child's life chances; a country where our economy can flourish while we also respect our obligations to the environment; and where diversity and difference is celebrated as an asset.

This is a Scotland I hope we can all strive for.

The plans I am setting out in this Programme for Government include:

- a 'Green New Deal', harnessing the power of the Scottish National Investment Bank, a £3 billion Green Investment Portfolio and a Green Growth Accelerator – what the Climate Change Emergency Response Group (CERG) has termed a 'Green City Deal' – to attract green finance to Scotland
- investing over £500 million in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage
- decarbonising Scotland's railways by 2035 and making the Highlands and Islands the world's first net zero aviation region by 2040
- developing regulations so that new homes from 2024 must use renewable or low carbon heat
- targeting a minimum of £30 million of support for renewable heat projects
- bringing forward the date for the first Scottish Child Payments to Christmas 2020
- making the first Job Start Payments in spring 2020
- announcing the first wave of new or refurbished schools via our £1 billion school investment programme
- providing £15 million of funding for more services and staff for additional support for learning
- putting in place a Women's Health Plan to tackle women's health inequalities
- providing an additional £20 million of funding to help tackle the drugs emergency
- continuing to support mental health, with a 24/7 crisis support service for children and young people and their families, a community wellbeing service enabling self-referral for children and young people and a £5 million investment in a community perinatal mental health service across Scotland
- taking forward planning to mitigate the worst consequences of a 'no deal' Brexit

This Programme for Government 2019-20 sets out the Scottish Government's plans to make Scotland a more successful country, with opportunities and increased wellbeing for all.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This Programme for Government has wellbeing at its heart.

Guided by *Scotland's National Performance Framework*, we will act to improve the wellbeing of the people of Scotland and secure a positive future for generations to come.

This year will see the delivery of 1140 hours of quality early learning and childcare across Scotland. The first generation to benefit from this ground-breaking commitment will also be the first to be eligible for our new Scottish Child Payment. Described as a game changer for families on lower incomes, £10 per child a week for families with children under 6 years of age will be delivered by Christmas 2020 and lift thousands of families out of poverty.

We are well on track to deliver 50,000 affordable homes and the Scottish National Investment Bank will open for business in 2020. New infrastructure investment in education, a commitment to extending the Scottish Attainment Challenge and a boost for additional support for learning show our continued focus on education and closing the attainment gap as our top priority.

This Programme for Government sets out actions we will take to end Scotland's contribution to global climate change. The actions we will take now and the foundations we will put in place in the year ahead are clear markers of how Scotland will transition to net zero emissions and how we will work in partnership to achieve it.

Our action to respond to the global climate emergency is based on the same principles of social justice and building a fairer and more prosperous country that underpin all of our work. Our approach to economic growth is centred on making sure that it is inclusive, sustainable and fair. Our work to strengthen public services focuses on providing what people need, when they need it, with dignity, kindness and respect. Our work to tackle poverty is built on the firm belief that inequality is a human rights issue that we must do everything we can to overcome.

The actions set out in this Programme for Government are only achievable with partnership and collaboration. The shared ambition of individuals, communities, businesses, local government, the public and third sectors to make Scotland a fairer, more equal and successful country is vital to realise our potential.

Ending Scotland's contribution to climate change

Scotland, like the rest of the world, is facing a climate emergency and our wellbeing, and that of future generations, is at stake. As a country, we have a strong record in cutting our emissions but our response to the global climate emergency requires us to accelerate our good work and make many fundamental changes in how we travel, live, heat our homes and in what jobs we do.

To do this, we need to work across the public, private and third sectors and across Scotland's diverse communities. The recently established Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG) already shows the sort of collaboration that we will need to see to be successful. We have noted their 12 specific asks and this Programme for Government responds to them, as well as making other major commitments to set out some of the first actions we will take to respond to the climate emergency. We will continue to work with CERG and other key stakeholders across Scottish society to deliver on our commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

Making these changes is the right thing to do, but it is also an opportunity. We can gain a foothold in the innovation, products and technology needed and use that advantage to make Scotland fairer and more equal and improve people's quality of life. We will show leadership in Government while leveraging the power of private investment and the creativity of communities.

We will use opportunities like the 2020-21 Budget and our Capital Spending Review to look across what we do and assess the extent to which our investments can accelerate emissions reductions and tackle climate change. Low carbon will also be the key theme of our next Infrastructure Investment Plan.

Scotland's 'Green New Deal'

Scotland's 'Green New Deal' will start to create the right conditions to kick-start investment and build the momentum needed for it to continue longer term, making a significant impact on emissions across different sectors and guaranteeing new, high quality jobs.

The Scottish National Investment Bank will begin investing in 2020, supported by the £150 million Building Scotland Fund and a further £340 million in investment to 2021. Securing the transition to net zero will be the Bank's primary mission. The Bank will be supported by £130 million in the coming year.

A Green Growth Accelerator – what the CERG has termed a 'Green City Deal' – extending the current Growth Accelerator model, will unlock additional investment for emissions-reducing infrastructure that supports our transition. The combination of public and private investment that this brings can transform cities and regions and builds on the existing Growth Accelerator's current work changing landscapes in Edinburgh City Centre and Dundee Waterfront.

We know that the green finance market is growing and we want Scotland to be ready to attract those investors. We will bring to market a £3 billion portfolio of projects over the next three years. These projects which will all be ready for investment will include renewables, waste and construction and will look at expanding into other sectors such as transport.

To reap the rewards of our new approaches to investment, and make sure that those rewards are shared fairly, we will take action to give Scotland's workforce the skills that it needs. Our Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan will set out how we will maximise opportunities for people to gain these skills and how we will work with colleges, universities, business and industry to equip the population with the skills of the future.



A ‘Mission Zero’ for transport

Transport is Scotland’s largest greenhouse gas emitting sector and this Programme for Government contains actions across all modes of transport. We will publish a new National Transport Strategy later this year which will redefine investment priorities to put sustainable transport at the heart of decision-making and ensure that transport plays a key role in delivering net zero emissions by 2045.

We will bring forward a step change in investment to make bus services greener and more punctual and reliable, so that more people make the choice to take the bus. Our actions include:

- investing over £500 million in improved bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage
- beginning plans to reallocate road space on parts of the motorway network around Glasgow to high-occupancy vehicles such as buses
- working with the Scottish National Investment Bank, the bus sector and potential investors to explore the potential for new forms of patient and innovative financing to radically accelerate the deployment of zero emission buses across Scotland

We are committed to phasing out new petrol and diesel cars by 2032. We have delivered 1,500 new electric charge points and supported business and communities to buy ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). We will go further by:

- providing an additional £17 million to support the demand for ULEVs through our Low Carbon Transport Loan scheme, while expanding the scheme to include used electric vehicles
- creating the conditions to phase out the need for all new petrol and diesel vehicles in Scotland’s public sector fleet by 2030, and phasing out the need for all petrol and diesel cars from the public sector fleet by 2025
- forming a new Strategic Partnership with electricity network companies to improve electric vehicle charging infrastructure and electricity networks across Scotland

While we work to ensure that Scotland’s railways are serving passengers across Scotland, we will also put in place plans to decarbonise railways by 2035. We will set out detailed timescales and actions in spring 2020 that will include investment in electric trains.

We will aim to decarbonise scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040 and aim to create the world’s first zero emission aviation region in partnership with Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL). This will include taking action to decarbonise airport operations in the HIAL region. We will begin trialling low or zero emission planes in 2021.

Driving down emissions from buildings and heating

We will make sure that new homes and buildings across Scotland are built to meet the challenge of the climate emergency, combining the action we need to take on climate change with our ambition to provide affordable, warm homes.

Our consultation this year on new building regulations will include measures to improve energy efficiency and the quality of construction and we will work with stakeholders to develop regulations to ensure that new homes from 2024 must use renewable or low carbon heat. Similarly, our ambition is to phase in renewable and low carbon heating systems for new non-domestic buildings consented from 2024. We will work with the construction, property and commercial development sectors to identify and support good practice to inform the development of standards on how we can achieve this.

We will show leadership in the public sector, engaging with partners on a new Net Zero Carbon Standard for new public buildings and accelerating efforts to use 100% renewable electricity on the Scottish public estate. In addition, Scottish Water will become a zero carbon user of electricity by 2040 – five years before our net zero target.

This year, we passed the most ambitious fuel poverty legislation in the UK, setting a target date of 2040 to tackle the root causes of fuel poverty. We will publish a Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2020, setting out how we will tackle all the drivers of fuel poverty in ways which work for different communities. This includes addressing the issues of low household incomes, unaffordable fuel prices, low levels of energy efficiency and inefficient use of fuel.

Biodiversity loss and the climate crisis are intimately bound together: nature plays a key role in defining and regulating our climate and climate is key in shaping the state of nature. Our Biodiversity Challenge Fund was almost entirely committed in its first year and so we will make an additional £2 million available to fund further important projects addressing biodiversity loss and climate change.

These new commitments signal important shifts in public sector investment and make clear our position on leveraging private investment. They will put Scotland at the forefront of innovation in new low emissions technologies and products, stimulating inward investment and supporting new and existing high quality jobs and sustainable supply chains. They will make a significant impact on reducing emissions across Scotland, ensuring we play our part in protecting the environment and the wellbeing of generations to come.

A successful, fair and green economy

This year, our economy faces the unprecedented threat of Brexit, possibly on a 'no deal' basis. As long as a 'no deal' Brexit remains a risk, we will do everything we can to ensure that we are as prepared as we can be, while being honest that we cannot prevent all the damage that it will cause, nor avoid an impact on the other business of government.

Despite this uncertainty, we hold strong to our vision of a society where opportunities are created for all and the dividends of increased prosperity are shared fairly. Economic growth must benefit everyone and everyone must have the opportunity to contribute to that growth. It must underpin and drive the wellbeing of our people.

Infrastructure and investment

This year alone, more than £5 billion is being invested in infrastructure projects across the country, including new homes, NHS elective care centres and infrastructure in our cities and regions.

Beginning in 2021, an additional £1 billion will be invested in new or refurbished schools, benefiting around 50,000 pupils across Scotland. This is in addition to the 60,000 who, by the end of next year, will have seen their schools renewed or refurbished since 2009 through the existing Schools for the Future programme. We will announce the first schools to benefit from this programme later this month.

Since 2014, we have committed to investing over £1.8 billion in City Region Deals, other Regional Growth Deals and linked investments over the next 15 years.

Over the next year, we will work with partners to assess the contribution that growth deals can make to tackling climate change and how our forthcoming investments can strengthen our economy, make our society fairer and protect our environment.

We will continue our work to enhance Scotland's connectivity, driving inclusive growth and jobs, as well as helping to reduce travel, open up opportunities and address isolation and remoteness.

As well as progressing towards our commitment to superfast broadband for every home and business in Scotland, we will establish the Scotland 5G Centre to make sure that we are ready to capitalise on this emergent technology.

When the Scottish National Investment Bank opens for business next year, it will be part of Scotland's new inclusive economic foundations and a driver of a new low carbon economy.

We will provide £130 million this year to set up the Bank and finance its early activities. We will continue to work with stakeholders to develop its key missions. However, its primary mission will be securing the transition to net zero.

Support for businesses and innovation

Strong innovation drives business and sector growth, creating and sustaining high quality jobs. Innovation is essential to help us achieve our ambitions for reducing emissions from travel and from sectors such as manufacturing. With the guidance of our Strategic Board, we are improving outcomes through the £2.4 billion annual investment in the enterprise and skills system.

We continue to support business investment in research and development (R&D). We will simplify and streamline our support for R&D – pulling together existing large funds and using them to help businesses transition to net zero.

We will continue to support businesses to transition to a highly-digitalised, low carbon economy. Working with partners in the private and public sectors, we will target high-employment, low-productivity sectors and support them to embed digital technologies to address their specific needs. We will ensure that this benefits workers, providing opportunities for them to reskill and upskill and access higher quality jobs.

Manufacturing has higher average wages than the service sector and tends to distribute jobs more widely across the country, making it a key contributor to our inclusive economic growth ambitions.

The year ahead will see us invest the first tranche of a £14 million investment targeted at small and medium manufacturing businesses to advance their research, develop new products, improve their productivity and upskill their workforce.

Scotland's tourism industry is an important contributor to the Scottish economy, supporting over 200,000 jobs. We will provide a package of support for the tourism sector to minimise the burden of regulation, support the growth of a skilled, professional and inclusive workforce and help the industry to deliver high quality and memorable experiences for visitors. We will work with partners to support repairs to the Waverley Paddle steamer, allowing her to sail again, and add more sites to a free open public Wi-Fi network across the North Coast 500 route. We will also extend the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund.

Regional and rural economies

Rural Scotland makes a vital contribution to our national economy. We know that more young people want to stay in the areas where they grew up, but we need to do more to stem rural depopulation and attract more people to live and work in rural and island communities.

We will develop an action plan to support repopulation of our rural and island communities and work with partners to test approaches using small scale pilots in rural Scotland.

We will publish the first ever National Islands Plan by the end of the year. It will set out how we and other public sector partners will work to improve outcomes for island economies and communities and, once it is published, we will report on our progress each year.

The food and drink industry is a vital part of Scotland's economy and of rural and island communities across the country. We are working towards a Scotland where people benefit from and take pride and pleasure in the food we produce, buy, cook, serve and eat every day. We will lay before Parliament a Good Food Nation Bill to provide a statutory framework to support this ambition.

Scotland in the global economy

Our enhanced export plan, *A Trading Nation*, has been published and is backed by £20 million of investment over three years. It sets out plans to grow Scotland's exports to add around £3.5 billion to Scottish GDP and create 17,500 more jobs. This year, we will continue to develop and expand our support for Scotland's exporters, including expanding our Trade Envoy Network, revamping the Global Scots Network and making up to £2 million available for the First Minister's Export Challenge.

This Programme commits to putting in place a four year Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Growth Plan by summer 2020. Taking the same evidence-based approach as we have to exports, it will focus on attracting investment to the sectors where Scotland is currently world-class as well as building on emerging expertise and enabling technology in addressing major global challenges around ageing, climate change and wellbeing.

Skills and fair work

A strong economy needs a skilled and diverse workforce. Making strides in our Fair Work agenda is essential to increasing wellbeing for everyone in Scotland, and to tackling poverty and inequality.

We will continue to increase the number of people receiving the real Living Wage and take action to help disabled people into work. We are investing up to £5 million over three years to help up to 2,000 women return to work after a career break, particularly in sectors where women are under-represented.

Scotland's future success depends on people, and migration is vital to our economic, demographic and cultural needs. Attracting people with the skills that our employers need has never been more important.

The UK Government's approach to immigration does not work for Scotland so we will develop a distinct Scottish approach to attracting and retaining talent to address current and future skills gaps in our workforce. We would be far more likely to succeed in those efforts if the Scottish Parliament had control over our immigration laws.

We will work to attract people and families from the rest of the UK to relocate here and work with universities and local authorities to encourage people to stay in Scotland and to move within Scotland to address regional skills gaps.



Improving outcomes through our public services

Public services make a deep and lasting contribution to the wellbeing of our communities. It is our responsibility to deliver high quality, accessible and effective public services, underpinned by our values of kindness, dignity, compassion, openness and transparency.

This is central to shaping the kind of country that we want to be.

We expect high standards of our public services and we place huge importance on making sure that they demonstrate genuine partnership working with the communities that they serve.

Growing up loved, safe and respected and closing the attainment gap

In the year ahead, we will deliver 1140 hours of funded early learning and childcare for families across Scotland. 80,000 families will benefit from the quality of care, including outdoor play and a nutritious meal. This policy will also save families around £4,500 per child each year.

Over the coming year, we will invest £3 million in the Access to Childcare Fund as part of a range of measures to tackle child poverty. It will provide support to establish new projects delivering community-based childcare for low income families. This will also provide opportunities for children within those communities to benefit from a range of activities before or after school or during the holidays. It will begin in April next year and run for two years.

While the attainment gap between children and young people from the wealthiest and poorest areas is closing, there is more to do to help every child reach their potential.

We have continued to invest in the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund with an investment of £182 million in this financial year, as part of a total of £750 million we have made available between 2016 and 2021.

This year's funding will put money into the hands of headteachers to provide additional targeted support to help children and young people overcome barriers to achievement related to poverty.

Regional Improvement Collaboratives have been set up to cover every local authority in Scotland. Over the past year, with our additional £5 million investment, the number of teachers involved has increased and regions are taking action to improve attainment, support curriculum development and help headteachers and others to improve their leadership skills.

In the coming year, we will invest an additional £15 million to improve additional support for learning across Scotland. Working in partnership with local government, this funding will secure additional staff in our classrooms, leading to better experiences for children and their families.

We will also establish a Teacher Innovation Fund, providing opportunities for innovative teachers to apply for funding to help them to access professional development, helping to enhance the attractiveness of teaching as a career.

We will continue funding for the Scottish Attainment Challenge beyond the end of this Parliamentary term – an early commitment on this Government's top priority, to allow local authorities to make plans.

We continue to take action to tackle Adverse Childhood Experiences and we are determined to improve outcomes for looked after children. It is our job, as a society, to love our most vulnerable children and give them the best start in life, doing everything we can to make sure they grow up surrounded by kindness, compassion and understanding.

The Independent Care Review is now in its third stage and will report its findings to us early next year. Care experienced young people have made clear, however, that we must not wait for the outcome of the Review's work before making changes to the care system. We will take action to provide further support to care-experienced people, including help to secure tenancies, greater access to dental care, wider eligibility for support for further and higher education and expanded entitlement to funded early learning and childcare.

Healthy and active

This year we will continue to support our NHS to deliver improved access to care, support our dedicated workforce and work across organisations and communities to tackle Scotland's health challenges.

Last year we set out how we would transform support for good mental health with long-term changes to the way people of all ages access support and treatment.

We have published recommendations to drive up standards of mental healthcare for new and expectant mothers, supported by £50 million of funding. We have put in place the plans needed to recruit additional staff, with the first of the additional school nurses entering training and new school counsellors starting work across the country. We have invested an additional £4 million in Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services to provide 80 new staff.

In the year ahead we will take forward our work to:

- develop 24/7 crisis support for children and young people and their families, creating a national service linking to police and emergency health services and introduce a text service so children and young people can text as well as phone to access help
- put into place a new community wellbeing service to support the mental health needs of children and young people, using an open access model that also allows self-referral. We will also scope out how this service can be made available in the future to people of all ages across Scotland
- increase specialist staffing levels at the two current mother and baby units in St John's Hospital in NHS Lothian and Leverndale Hospital in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde to create centres of expertise
- support development of a community perinatal mental health service across Scotland, backed by £5 million
- have all 350 additional school counsellors in place

The number of lives lost to drugs in Scotland is an emergency. This year, we will take further action to tackle the issues associated with use of illicit drugs, reduce harm and stop the rising number of drug deaths.

We will invest an additional £20 million over two years to increase direct support for projects to test new and innovative approaches, improve services and save lives.

We cannot address problem drug use and the harm it causes without addressing the root causes of these issues. Many people who use drugs also endure homelessness, violence and mental health problems.

We know that the reservation of drugs legislation to Westminster is holding areas of Scotland back from taking new approaches that can save lives, for example medically-supervised overdose prevention facilities. While the UK Government refuse to act, we will consult on drugs law reform so that the Scottish Parliament is ready to act when it has the power to do so.

In the coming year, we will establish a Women's Health Plan. It will underpin actions to tackle women's health inequalities. The new plan will improve access to contraception and focus on reducing inequalities in health outcomes which only affect women such as endometriosis and improving services for women undergoing the menopause.

We will continue to build capacity and capability in our NHS with a focus on improved access to care. We have set out how we will substantially and sustainably improve waiting times across the NHS. We are making progress but there is more to do.

As part of our Waiting Times Improvement Plan, this year we are investing £102 million to carry out more procedures such as cataract removal and hip and knee replacements, as well as increase the number of outpatient and diagnostic appointments. This investment will also support work to increase capacity, including additional workforce, at the network of elective and diagnostic centres currently being created.

To ensure patient safety we will create a new national body to strengthen infection prevention and control, including in the built environment. The body will have oversight for the design, construction and maintenance of major infrastructure developments within the NHS and also play a crucial policy and guidance role regarding incidents and outbreaks across health and social care.

Communities where everyone is valued, protected and respected

We have an obligation, both legal and moral, to respect, protect, fulfil and enhance international human rights. It is a crucial part of making Scotland a safer, fairer and more equal society where everyone is valued, protected and respected.

Poverty and inequality are human rights issues. Our vision is for every person in Scotland to live with human dignity and enjoy their rights in full.

We will continue to take action to reduce child poverty, tackle food insecurity and make sure that the voices of those who experience poverty are heard.

Keeping our communities safe

We will continue to protect the police budget for the lifetime of the Parliament and are providing a further £29 million revenue this year to support Police Scotland.

The major reforms of our justice system, to put victims at its heart, will build on the improvements already made such as the changes to the operation of the victim notification scheme and support for bereaved families. We are consulting on the range of serious crimes where victims can make a statement to the court and we will bring forward legislation to enable victims to set out to the court how the offence has impacted on them physically, emotionally and financially.

We will also work with justice agencies, local government, the third sector and others to consider the whole system changes needed to address Scotland's internationally high rate of imprisonment.

This work will be informed by public health responses to issues such as the misuse of drugs and the impact of adversity, trauma and multiple disadvantage. It will set out a long-term vision for our justice system and how we respond to the changing nature of offending in ways which are proportionate, just, effective and promote rehabilitation, as well as keeping our communities safe and responding to the needs of victims.

Protecting rights

We are taking action across society to make it a fairer place for everyone, and ensure that people's rights are respected and everyone is able to enjoy their rights and freedoms.

The National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership will work to ensure that Scotland is a world leader in putting human rights into practice. It will develop a new statutory framework which will help to safeguard the human rights of everyone in Scotland. It will drive work that includes bringing protections provided by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women and other treaties into domestic law.

We are committed to incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law. We will deliver the legislation needed to do this by the end of this Parliamentary term. Our consultation on how a new Act could incorporate the UNCRC has just closed, and we will respond to this in the coming months.

We will consult on the detail of a draft Gender Recognition Bill by the end of this year, setting out our proposals to reform the current process of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate and how we will bring Scotland into line with international best practice.

In the year ahead we will take forward the recommendations of the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls. We will:

- create a What Works? Institute to identify, test and promote best practice in changing public attitudes to and challenging stereotypes about women's and girls' equality and rights – we will work with partners to develop a framework for the Institute and its work by summer next year
- establish a Gender Beacon Collaborative to promote gender equality across Scottish public life – membership and ambitions for the collaborative will be announced later this year
- continue to lobby the UK Government to improve parental leave
- support work to encourage 50/50 representation at elections

As part of our work to eradicate violence against women and girls, we will introduce the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) Bill. This will improve the way in which forensic medical examinations and associated healthcare interventions are conducted, introducing a self-referral model for victims of sexual crime who wish to have a forensic medical examination without first reporting a crime to the police.

Poverty and inequality

In its first year, Social Security Scotland has supported over 91,000 people and delivered an essential public service based on fairness, dignity and respect.

The Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods and Carer's Allowance Supplement are all providing help to those that need it most and this month the first Funeral Support Payments will be made to help families on lower incomes struggling with the costs of a funeral.

This autumn, young carers will start to receive £300 per year through the Young Carer Grant. We expect that this will help 2,400 young carers across Scotland.

In spring 2020, young people will receive the first payments of the Job Start Payment, assuming we get necessary cooperation from the UK Government. We expect that around 5,000 young people will benefit from this support in the first year. The £250 payment (or £400 for those with children) will help with travel costs, clothing, lunches and other expenses on return to work. Care leavers will get this help if they are receiving a qualifying benefit, even if they have not had a period of unemployment.

We will also bring forward the date for the first payments of the Scottish Child Payment. For under 6s, the first payments will be made by Christmas 2020, giving families who need it most an additional £10 per child per week. The payment will lift an estimated 30,000 children out of relative poverty when fully rolled out and increase family incomes for thousands more.

In the year ahead, we will also deliver further actions to support children and families and tackle poverty. As part of a £22 million package of bespoke parental employment programmes, we will begin delivery of our new Parental Employability Support providing intensive support to low-income families through to 2022. This will include specific support to disabled parents to get quality jobs and stay in work.

In addition to the actions set out in our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, this year we will:

- boost parental employability programmes, facilitating better local connections between employability services and the expansion of early learning and childcare. Backed by over £4 million, this work will aim to enhance family incomes by improving access to work and in-work progression
- introduce a £500,000 Family Learning Scotland Programme to help parents gain new skills and take up learning and training – integrated with the expansion of early learning and childcare to allow parents to build on their skills and gain better work
- prevent homelessness for low-income families through supporting the work of social landlords to prevent crisis points with a new £1.5 million Homelessness Prevention Fund
- invest £1 million to improve the life chances of young parents and their children. We will build on good practice, using key workers to enable young parents to receive the support they need, including access to good quality housing, help around employment, education and training and the financial help that they are entitled to

We are on track to achieve our target of delivering 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 for social rent, by 2021, with over half of those already completed.

As well as providing affordable homes, we are taking action to help people to sustain their tenancies. This year, we will provide more than £63 million in Discretionary Housing Payments to help 70,000 households and protect them from the impact of the UK Government's bedroom tax and other welfare cuts.

We will deliver a £150 million national pilot scheme to provide support for first-time buyers with up to £25,000 towards their deposits. The scheme will launch in December this year and will be open to all first-time buyers, regardless of income or eligibility for other existing schemes.

Everyone needs a home – a safe, warm place to live, feel secure and have a sense of belonging. As part of the transformational programme set out in the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, we will launch a fund of up to £4.5 million for third sector organisations on the frontline to innovate and transform the services they provide.

We will also launch a new £10 million Credit Union Investment Fund to increase the number of people saving and borrowing from Credit Unions. The fund will provide loans to Credit Unions to strengthen their balance sheets and increase their digital and physical presence, boosting their ability to support more people.

Our commitment to protecting rights extends beyond Scotland. This year, we will support a newly-expanded programme to protect vulnerable groups in Malawi and Zambia. The programme will support leadership to tackle local issues and give support to a wider range of marginalised groups such as women, children, those with disabilities, LGBTI and people with albinism.



We have also introduced the Referendums Bill which sets out the way future referendums will be run and will provide clarity about the process for voters, campaign participants and those administering the referendum process. We will seek agreement to a transfer of power during the passage of the Bill to enable an independence referendum that is beyond challenge to be held. It would be contrary to basic democratic principles for the UK Government to attempt to block such a referendum.

Scotland's future

Our ambitions set out here are in stark contrast to the UK Government's reckless commitment to a 'no deal' Brexit. We know that Brexit will do harm to our economy and our people.

We believe decisions about Scotland's future should be made by the people of Scotland.

So as well as measures to limit the damaging consequences of decisions that have been imposed upon us, it is more important than ever to set out what could be achieved if we took decisions ourselves as an independent country and to ensure people can exercise their democratic right to choose.

We have a clear democratic mandate, won in the 2016 Holyrood election to offer the choice on independence in this Parliament – and we intend to do so. A majority of MSPs support an independence referendum within this Parliament.

The Scottish Government produced a comprehensive plan for an independent Scotland in 2014. The Government will now undertake the necessary work to update that plan and ensure that people have the information they need to make informed choices over the future of the country.

We are now more than three years on from the European Union Referendum. In that referendum, the people of Scotland voted decisively to remain within the EU.



SCOTLAND'S FUTURE AND OUR PLACE IN EUROPE

The European Union is a group of 28 independent countries which have come together on the basis of shared values to create the world's biggest single market and trading bloc.

The Scottish Government believes the best future for Scotland is to become an independent member of the EU.

Scotland is a wealthy country and is particularly well-placed to benefit from, and contribute to, Europe's future, with our extraordinary energy resources, some of the world's best universities, our leading role in many cutting-edge industries and commitment to the EU's founding values.

In 2016 people in Scotland voted overwhelmingly against Brexit. That vote, however, was ignored by the UK Government. A subsequent compromise offer that would have kept the whole of the UK in the Single Market and Customs Union was also dismissed.

The current UK Government now says it is determined to leave the EU with or without a deal on 31 October. It has said that the 'backstop' for the island of Ireland 'cannot form part of an agreed Withdrawal Agreement'. This, and other comments and actions of the Prime Minister, have dramatically increased the chances of the UK exiting the EU on a 'no deal' basis. Indeed, it appears that the UK Government is actively pursuing a 'no deal' Brexit.

The Scottish Government will continue to work with others in Scotland, the Welsh Government and people across the UK to do all we can to prevent such a disastrous outcome, including by supporting a second EU referendum with remain on the ballot paper and the revocation of the Article 50 process in the event the UK is facing a 'no deal' Brexit.

However, regardless of what happens over the next few months, it is clear that Scotland's interests are not best served by Westminster. The House of Commons has been in turmoil for much of the past three years and now faces an unprecedented democratic crisis given the Prime Minister's plans to suspend the UK Parliament for several weeks prior to the planned date of exit from the EU.

The Scottish Government is therefore preparing for all eventualities.

Preparing for a 'no deal' Brexit

Given that a 'no deal' Brexit is an increasingly likely outcome, we will do everything we can to ensure that we are as prepared as we can be, while being honest that we cannot prevent all the damage that it will cause.

A 'no deal' Brexit will mean that on 31 October, the UK's status under EU law will change from that of an EU Member State to that of a 'third country', with no trade or cooperation agreements in place with the EU. There will be no transition period and no 'managed no deal'. The UK will immediately be outside the Single Market and the Customs Union and will no longer be part of the framework of EU law.

In this scenario, it will be impossible for the UK to maintain the current seamless arrangements with the EU across the full range of sectors, from justice and security, transport connectivity, trade flows and supply chains and medicines regulation.

Leaving the EU without a deal in an October timeframe will bring with it additional challenges due to winter weather, seasonal illness, the seasonal nature of our agriculture industry and constraints placed on storage facilities due to the festive period.

The Chief Economist to the Scottish Government has set out the risk associated with a 'no deal' Brexit: a reduction of up to 7% in Scottish GDP and the loss of 100,000 jobs. This analysis is consistent with those of various third party organisations such as the Bank of England, the International Monetary Fund and the Office for Budget Responsibility.

There could be a reduction in food choice and price rises, along with disruption to the movement of other essentials, including medical supplies, and traded goods. There could be shocks to the economy and the labour market. There could be a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable in our communities. There could be significant disruption for Scots living in the EU as a result of changes to free movement policy and concern among non-UK EU citizens living in Scotland.

Therefore, out of necessity and not choice, we are continuing to plan and prepare for a 'no deal' Brexit on 31 October.

Work to
prevent
'no deal' Brexit





While much of the responsibility for addressing the impact of a 'no deal' Brexit lies with the UK Government, we, and our public sector partners, have undertaken significant work and contingency planning for the effects of a hard Brexit right across our economy and public services. We are taking a range of actions including:

- taking steps to minimise disruption to supplies of food and medicines, should there be problems at key ports and our transport and logistics networks suffer disruption
- providing bespoke online information and support on areas of concern to the public, such as the rights of EU citizens after exit and how businesses can prepare themselves
- ensuring that over 150 legislative instruments are put in place to make sure that the statute book is ready if we leave without a deal
- working with Scotland's business organisations to provide appropriate information, advice and support to help them manage the business and economic implications of leaving the EU
- paying farmers and crofters 95% of their Common Agricultural Policy entitlement through a loan scheme by the start of October to support them if Brexit takes place on 31 October

We will continue to push the UK Government for action, clarity and information in the event of a 'no deal' Brexit. The UK Government must:

- share the information we need on delays and other issues at the border
- confirm whether arrangements will be in place that avoid additional tariff or non-tariff barriers on exports of food and drink produce with priority countries
- share data on the continuity of supply of medical supplies and radioisotopes and make sure that regulatory frameworks are in place for their continued supply
- take action to minimise as far as possible the worst impacts of an economic shock
- support households to manage an increase in the cost of living and prevent more people from falling into poverty, including making changes to Universal Credit, lifting the benefits freeze on working age benefits and uprating benefits in line with inflation
- allow a tailored approach for Scotland within the UK immigration system, engage with EU Member States on the rights of UK citizens living in the EU and guarantee the rights of EU citizens living in Scotland
- take account of our separate criminal justice system when planning for the loss of access to key EU security and law enforcement tools, share information with the Scottish Government and our operational partners on contingency plans, proposed mitigations and developments and make sure Scotland is fully involved in decision-making and planning for maritime security issues
- meet the costs related to EU exit, including additional costs for policing, provide full financial compensation for the consequences of EU exit and commit to fully replace EU structural funds, recognising Scotland's right to determine its own priorities

Keeping pace

Remaining aligned with EU law will be an important signal to our European partners of our ongoing commitment to co-operation in the future. It will demonstrate that we will not accept any regression of protections and it will smooth the path for Scotland to re-join the EU.

Last year the Scottish Parliament passed the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Legal Continuity) Bill. That Bill was designed to protect our system of laws from the damaging consequences of EU exit. After the Scottish Parliament agreed to the Bill, the UK Parliament passed its own Bill – now the UK EU (Withdrawal) Act – which retrospectively constrained the power of the Scottish Parliament to prepare devolved laws for Brexit, despite an explicit refusal by Holyrood to give its consent to this legislation.

The Scottish Government has decided to introduce a Continuity Bill to allow the Scottish Parliament to 'keep pace' with EU law in devolved areas if Brexit occurs.

We are also clear that EU exit must not impede our ability to maintain high environmental standards. We will develop proposals to ensure that we maintain the role of environmental principles and effective and proportionate environmental governance and any legislative measures required will be taken forward in the Continuity Bill. In the event of 'no deal', we will put in place interim, non-legislative measures while continuing to develop longer-term solutions.

We will seek to change the way intergovernmental relations are conducted in the UK, on the basis of equality between the Governments of the UK and, where it is in Scotland's interests, we will agree UK-wide frameworks in particular policy areas previously subject to EU law.



The Continuity Bill will enable Scotland to keep pace with EU law, in devolved areas, if Brexit occurs

Citizens' Assembly

As part of our response to Brexit and the unprecedented position Scotland finds itself in, we have also established an independent Citizens' Assembly.

Citizens' Assemblies are often used to help societies discuss significant constitutional or social issues in a respectful, non-partisan manner based on evidence and reasoned debate.

The Assembly, which will comprise up to 130 members of the public and is run independently of government by two co-convenors, builds on our work to promote participatory democracy and open government.

The Citizens' Assembly of Scotland will consider three broad questions:

- What kind of country are we seeking to build?
- How can we best 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 is expected to conclude its deliberations in April 2020 and the Scottish Government will respond to the recommendations of the Assembly within three months.

SCOTLAND'S FUTURE

The last three years of Brexit negotiations and actions, such as the passage of legislation to constrain Holyrood's powers, illustrate that Westminster often acts against Scotland's interests and wishes.

The democratic Scottish Government believes decisions about Scotland's future should be made by the people of Scotland.

So as well as measures to limit the damaging consequences of decisions that have been imposed upon us, it is more important than ever to set out what could be achieved if we took decisions ourselves as an independent country and to ensure people can exercise their democratic right to choose independence.

The government has a clear democratic mandate, won in the 2016 Holyrood election, to offer the choice on independence in this Parliament and we intend to do so. A majority of MSPs support an independence referendum within this Parliament.

The Scottish Government produced a comprehensive plan for an independent Scotland in 2014. The Government will now undertake the necessary work to update that plan and ensure that people have the information they need to make informed choices over the future of the country.

We have also introduced the Referendums Bill which sets out the way future referendums will be run and will provide clarity about the process for voters, campaign participants and those administering the referendum process. We will seek agreement to a transfer of power during the passage of the Bill to enable an independence referendum that is beyond challenge to be held. It would be contrary to basic democratic principles for the UK Government to attempt to block such a referendum.

The Legislative Programme 2019-20



This year, we will bring forward legislation to promote fairness and wellbeing in our communities, address the global climate emergency and legislate for the conduct of future referendums.

As was the case last year, it is possible that the chaotic handling of Brexit by the UK Government may require changes to this Legislative Programme but we continue to work to avoid that where we can.

We commit in this Programme for Government that the Bill to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law will be the key Bill in the final year of this Parliament and will be passed before the next election. We will also set out the timetable for a Gender Recognition Bill following consultation on the detail of the draft provisions.

We will also continue work to bring forward a Bill on Restricting Foods Promotions for introduction in next year's Legislative Programme.

Bills for introduction in 2019-20

Animal Health and Welfare (Amendment) Bill

Budget Bill

Circular Economy Bill

Civil Partnership Bill

Continuity Bill

Defamation and Malicious Publication Bill

UEFA European Championship Bill

Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) Bill

Good Food Nation Bill

Hate Crime Bill

Heat Networks Bill

Redress (Survivors of In Care Abuse) Bill

Rural Support Bill

Transient Visitor Levy Bill

Bills already announced

Children and Young People (Information Sharing) Bill

Children Bill

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) Bill

Consumer Scotland Bill

Disclosure Bill

Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) Bill

Non-Domestic Rates Bill

Referendums Bill

Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Bill

Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill

Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill

Scottish National Investment Bank Bill

Transport Bill

Bills passed since 2018-19 Programme for Government

Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill

Budget Bill

Census (Amendment) Bill

Damages (Investment Returns and Periodical Payments) Bill

Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) Bill

Health and Care (Staffing) Bill

Human Tissue (Authorisation) Bill

Management of Offenders Bill

Planning Bill

Prescription Bill

Scottish Crown Estate Bill

South of Scotland Enterprise Bill

Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) Bill

Bill Summaries



Animal Health and Welfare (Amendment)

This Bill will increase the maximum penalties for the most serious animal welfare offences to five years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine and also make changes to the maximum penalties for various wildlife offences. It will increase the protection for service animals by implementing 'Finn's Law'. The Bill will also provide powers to make regulations for fixed penalty notices in relation to animal welfare offences and provides a new process to allow animals that have been taken into possession on welfare grounds to be sold or rehomed without the need for a court order.

Budget

The annual Budget Bill provides parliamentary approval for the Scottish Government's spending plans, allocation of resources to our strategic objectives and supporting progress towards our vision of a more successful country, through increasing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and improving wellbeing.

Circular Economy

The Bill will continue to advance Scotland's ambitions for the circular economy through measures which will encourage the re-use of products and reduce waste. It will enable further action to tackle our reliance on single use products.

Civil Partnership

The Bill will make civil partnership available to mixed sex couples. This is in line with equality and human rights principles. It also reflects the UK Supreme Court judgement made last year on civil partnership in England and Wales.

Continuity

The Bill will provide for the ability to maintain alignment with EU law in devolved areas after EU exit, in particular by providing a 'keeping pace' power and will replace, where necessary, powers in connection with existing EU law lost in consequence of the repeal of the European Communities Act 1972. The Bill will also make provision to maintain the role of environmental principles and effective and proportionate environmental governance after EU exit.

Defamation and Malicious Publication

The Bill will take forward the recommendations of the Scottish Law Commission and will simplify and modernise the law of defamation. The reforms will ensure that a more appropriate balance is struck between protecting reputation and freedom of expression. Amongst other changes, the Bill will recognise a defence of publication on a matter of public interest and ensure that no proceedings can be brought where a defamatory statement is made only to the person who is the subject of it.

UEFA European Championship

The Bill will prohibit ticket touting and make provisions to protect commercial interests in connection with Glasgow's participation as one of 12 host cities of the 2020 UEFA European Football Championships.

Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences)

The Bill will underpin the ongoing work of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland's Rape and Sexual Assault Taskforce. Amongst other things the Bill will establish a national self-referral model for victims of sexual crime who wish to have a forensic medical examination without first reporting to the police.

Good Food Nation

This Bill will underpin the significant work already being done – or planned – to deliver the Good Food Nation ambition in Scotland. It places responsibilities on Scottish Ministers and selected public bodies to set out statements of policy on food and to have regard to these statements in the exercise of relevant functions.

Hate Crime

Following on from Lord Bracadale's independent review of hate crime legislation in Scotland and our consultation, the Bill will take forward the consolidation and updating of hate crime legislation. It will extend the characteristics to which hate crime statutory aggravations apply and will also introduce 'stirring up' offences for all relevant characteristics.

Heat Networks

The Bill will introduce regulation of the heat network sector to support, facilitate and create controls in respect of the development of district and communal heating infrastructure in Scotland. Accelerating the deployment of heat networks will help Scotland to decarbonise its heat supply and will contribute to our climate change targets.

Redress (Survivors of In Care Abuse)

The Bill will establish a financial redress scheme for survivors of historical child abuse whilst in care in Scotland. It will provide for the detailed aspects of the scheme such as eligibility, how decisions are made and the making of payments.

Rural Support

The Bill will create regulation-making powers for the Scottish Ministers to amend or replace the EU Common Agricultural Policy elements of retained EU law and provide new powers for the collection of agricultural data. The retained EU law powers are needed if Scotland has to leave the EU, when we would seek to simplify and improve CAP legislation for its operation beyond 2020.

Transient Visitor Levy

The Bill will create a discretionary power for local authorities to apply a tax or levy on overnight visitor stays. The decision to implement any tax or levy created will be entirely at the discretion of individual local authorities and receipts will be to fund local authority expenditure on tourism.



Chapter 1

ENDING SCOTLAND'S CONTRIBUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE



Scotland is facing a climate emergency. Like the rest of the world, we must act to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change on our people and our planet.

We have already committed to some of the toughest statutory emissions reductions in the world. Adopting a net zero emissions target by 2045 underlines our ambition that Scotland will no longer contribute to global climate change.

This will require changes in the way that we currently live, work and travel. But our world-class innovation and our natural assets leave us well placed to make those changes while seizing the opportunities of transitioning to net zero.

Scotland has a unique opportunity to be at the forefront of global action, gaining an early foothold in developing new low emissions solutions, products and processes that we can export across the world. This will create new employment opportunities and attract investment to Scotland.

In considering how we will make this transition, we must consider how the impacts and opportunities will be equitably shared, underlining the importance of our Just Transition Commission. It will provide an interim report early next year and publish its final report in 2021.

We have committed to updating our Climate Change plan in light of the latest advice from the UK Committee on Climate Change. We will use the recommendations from the Committee and draw on robust scientific evidence to help us to update the plan early next year.

But we know that there are areas where we can take action now. In particular, we will make changes to how we develop our infrastructure and grow our economy, how we travel, how we use our land and how we heat our homes – such changes will make an important contribution to emissions reduction in Scotland.

This Programme for Government commits to vital early action to accelerate our journey towards net zero.

The Climate Emergency Response Group

Scotland's answer to the climate emergency will require us to work across the public, private and third sectors and across Scotland's diverse communities.

The recently established Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG) already shows the sort of collaboration that we will need to see to be successful. We have noted their 12 specific asks and this Programme for Government responds as follows. We will continue to work with them and other key stakeholders across Scottish society to deliver on our commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

Climate Emergency Response Group asks	Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2019-20 commitments
Mobilise the £11 billion of annual public procurement to support the product and service innovation the climate emergency response needs	We will mobilise the £11 billion of annual public procurement to support our climate emergency response, including consulting on legislation to require public bodies to set out how they will meet our climate change and circular economy obligations
Produce public guidance on sustainable, climate-friendly, healthy diets	We will work with business, the public and the third sector to develop guidance so more people are encouraged to eat more locally-produced, sustainable and healthy food that supports our aims on climate change
A £100 million Agricultural Modernisation Fund	We will create a new Agricultural Transformation Programme focused on sustainability, simplicity, profitability, innovation, inclusion and productivity. We will consider any additional funding implications in the Budget
Make regional land use plans for maximising the potential of every part of Scotland's land to contribute to the fight against climate change	We will make regional land use plans for maximising the potential of every part of Scotland's land to contribute to the fight against climate change
Initiate four new Green City Region Deals	We will unlock additional resource for emissions-reducing investment through a Green Growth Accelerator – referred to by the CERG as a 'Green City Deal' – combining public and private investment to transform cities and regions
Signal that every one of Scotland's city centres will be vehicle emission-free by 2030	We will consult on Scotland's ambition to make the transformative shift to zero or ultra-low emission city centres by 2030 by engaging extensively with key sectors, in particular with the bus sector

Climate Emergency Response Group asks	Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2019-20 commitments
Establish a public-interest company to operate CCS (Carbon Capture and Storage) infrastructure	We will explore with partners their proposals on Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) and this will inform our Scottish public sector response to the UK consultation on CCUS business models. We will also work with the Scottish National Investment Bank to explore how to support the full-scale commercial deployment of CCUS in Scotland. Alongside this, we will take forward a number of actions to support and promote CCUS – including support for the Acorn project at St Fergus and the emerging Scottish industry-led CCUS alliance
Enhance building standards to deliver zero-carbon homes and buildings	We will set new standards to reduce energy demand, and associated carbon emissions, within new buildings by 2021. In addition, we will require new homes consented from 2024 to use renewable or low carbon heat. For non-domestic buildings, our ambition is to phase in this approach from this date
Accelerate Scotland's energy retrofit scheme – to reach Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2030 and zero-carbon by 2045	We will publish an updated position in our Energy Efficiency Route Map in December 2019 to accelerate the improvements of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings in our homes
Create a Scottish Heat Pump Sector Deal	We will go wider than this with the Scottish Low Carbon Heat Funding Invitation targeting a minimum of £30 million of support for projects, including heat pumps, that demonstrate innovative and low carbon ways of heating buildings
Complete plans for how we generate the renewable electricity needed to reach net-zero	Our next Energy Statement will set out the extent to which renewable and low carbon energy generation will need to combine in order to meet net zero, and we will monitor progress on an annual basis
Dedicate the Scottish National Investment Bank to delivering on the Climate Emergency	The primary mission of the Scottish National Investment Bank will be to ensure transition to net zero

The Scottish Government is also making a number of other major commitments in response to the climate emergency.

Finance	We will bring to market a £3 billion Green Investment Portfolio for projects supporting our response to the climate emergency
Transport	We will invest over £500 million to improve our bus services across Scotland
Transport	We will work to decarbonise flights within Scotland by 2040
Transport	We will decarbonise Scotland's passenger rail services by 2035, ahead of the UK's target of 2040
Scottish Water	Scottish Water will become a zero-carbon user of electricity by 2040 – five years before our net zero target
Electric vehicles	We will make a further £17 million available for zero interest loans to support the purchase of ultra-low emission vehicles
Planning	The fourth National Planning Framework will help to radically accelerate reduction of emissions
Buildings	We will establish Net Zero-Carbon Standards for all new public sector buildings
Public sector fleet	We will work to decarbonise our public sector fleet by 2025
National Forum on Climate Change	We will establish a National Forum on Climate Change so that everyone can be involved in the decisions we have to take
Woodland and forestry creation	In the coming year, we will raise our ambition and commit to planting 12,000 hectares. This will be supported by an additional £5 million investment
Biodiversity	We will make an additional £2 million available to the Biodiversity Challenge Fund, funding further important projects which address biodiversity and climate change

These commitments are set out in more detail below.

OUR APPROACH TO POLICY AND SECURING INVESTMENT

The next parliamentary year offers the opportunity to lay down clear markers to citizens, the public sector, businesses and investors about Scotland's transition to net zero and how we will work in partnership to achieve it.

We recognise our responsibility as Government to provide clear statements of our medium- and long-term ambitions and how we intend to use the levers we have to progress them. This Programme for Government is a key first step in doing that.

The first part of this chapter sets out the medium- to long-term policy platforms that will provide the vital foundations for investment and allow organisations, both public and private, to plan their activity.

Public finance

Later this year we will publish our Budget for 2020-21 and consider longer-term spending priorities.

This gives us the opportunity to look across our activity and assess where government investments are focused and the extent to which these can accelerate emissions reductions and tackle climate change.

The Infrastructure Commission for Scotland will publish its advice on priorities by the end of this year. We will use that advice to produce our next Infrastructure Plan early next year. Low carbon will be the key theme of the Plan. The Infrastructure Commission's advice will also be considered in our Capital Spending Review. Taken together with the establishment of the Scottish National Investment Bank this will make clear to citizens and businesses our priorities for investment in low emissions infrastructure.

Planning

The global climate emergency means that the time is right for wide-ranging debate on more radical planning policy options.

Innovation, infrastructure and investment will be needed to transform our cities, towns and rural areas into places that support lower emissions lifestyles and businesses. Planning is a vital tool in leveraging the changes we need to make to achieve our goals.

We will begin engagement on the fourth National Planning Framework in autumn this year. Through it, we will explore planning options that radically accelerate reduction of emissions.

By summer next year, we will publish a draft National Planning Framework which sets out how and where development should take place across Scotland for the period up to 2050.

This will be part of a wider package to deliver the reform envisaged by the Planning Act 2019. As part of that wider programme, we will introduce legislation on permitted development rights. This would support, for example, developments such as micro-renewable technologies. We will also launch a programme of digital transformation to make better use of digital technologies and data, including a digital mapping prototype to support co-ordinated and sustainable development.

Procurement

Public procurement in Scotland has a value of over £11 billion per year.

It therefore plays a vital role in shaping markets and investment. We will use that influence to drive change and build responsible supply chains, taking a collaborative approach to tackling the climate emergency just as we have done with Fair Work.

To do that, we will consult on legislation to require public bodies to set out how they will meet our climate change and circular economy obligations in their procurement strategies.

The Scottish Government will take the lead by buying goods and services that reduce emissions, minimise waste and allow for re-use or recycling wherever appropriate.

Together, the public sector will make sure that what we buy and how we buy it helps to meet these obligations.

SCOTLAND'S 'GREEN NEW DEAL'

We will rethink not only what investments we make, but also how we make those investments. We need to leverage the power of public and private sector investment, target investment in the right projects and use those to create and sustain quality jobs.

Green finance

The UK Committee on Climate Change has said that the capital investment needed to achieve net zero is significant but, with collaboration between the public and private sectors, it is achievable.

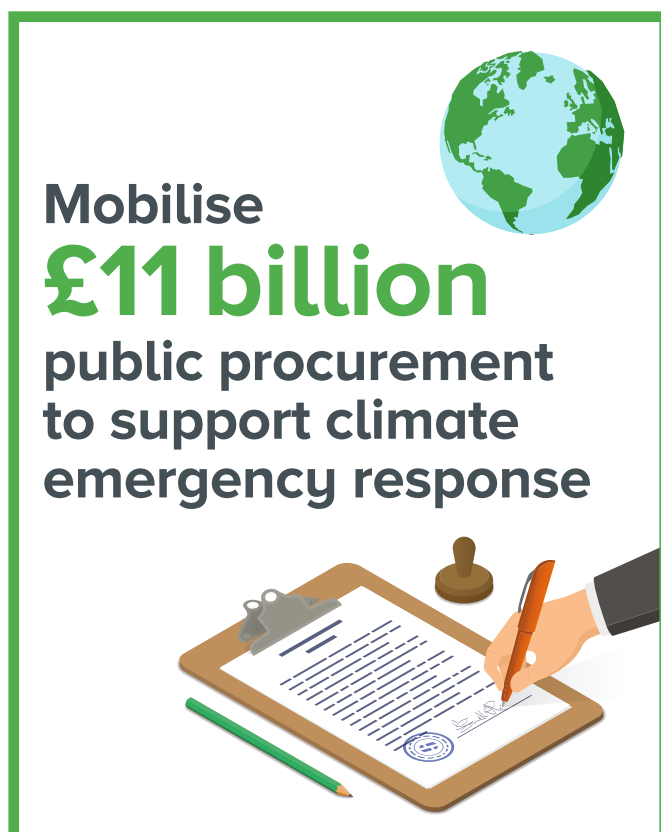
The public sector will use its significant spending capacity. But we know that the market for green finance is burgeoning. Scotland's natural assets, skills and reputation for innovation make it a highly attractive place for that investment.

Next year, the new Scottish National Investment Bank will be established and, with its budget of £130 million in the first year, it will work across the public and private sectors to provide patient finance to drive investment in Scotland. We confirm in this Programme that its primary mission will be to secure the transition to net zero.

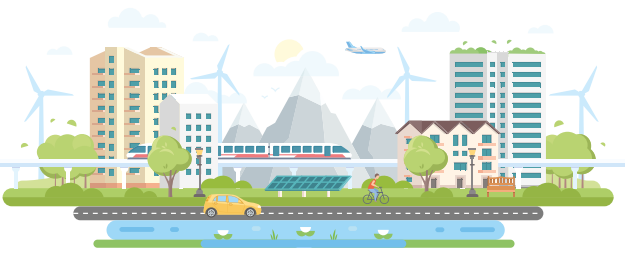
Another key element of public investment will be extending the current Growth Accelerator to become a Green Growth Accelerator – what the CERG has termed a 'Green City Deal'. This will allow our local authorities to invest in emissions-reducing infrastructure for their area.

We will start discussions with councils and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) to discuss the model, identify local projects and agree the levels of finance available through the upcoming Budget.

We will also provide a strong message to private investors. Green finance is growing and we want the market to know that Scotland is a great place to invest in.



Green Growth Accelerator to transform cities and regions



We will identify and bring to market a Green Investment Portfolio of £3 billion of investable projects over the next three years. This will include projects involving renewables, waste, the circular economy and property, and will actively look to expand the investment market into other sectors such as transport, housing and hydrogen.

We will work with partners including Scottish Enterprise, the Scottish National Investment Bank, Scottish Futures Trust and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency to make a public call for projects in November this year. We will also leverage private sector skills and expertise to originate and structure a pipeline of projects and promote it globally.

The Clyde Gateway in the east of Glasgow will become Scotland's first Green Regeneration Innovation District, working to decarbonise travel and energy for homes and businesses, and addressing the priorities of local people. It provides a model for place-based green regeneration which can be adopted elsewhere.

£3 billion green investment portfolio



We are supporting the establishment of the Global Ethical Finance Initiative (GEFI) to position Scotland at the centre of international discourse on ethical and sustainable finance, with a major conference to be held in Edinburgh in October 2019. We are working in partnership with GEFI and the United Nations Development Programme to develop models and tools to drive investment in nature-based solutions to tackle the challenge of the *UN Sustainable Development Goals* embedded in Scotland's *National Performance Framework*.

These actions will put Scotland on the map, showing that we are a place to build green projects and develop technologies to address climate change. Our actions will create the conditions needed to kick-start investment and build the momentum needed for us to deliver on our targets and improve the quality of life of our people.

A 'Mission Zero' for transport

An area where we can and must act immediately is in transport.

Transport is Scotland's largest greenhouse gas emitting sector. Reducing our emissions means that we not only need to decarbonise our existing models of transport but also change the ways in which we travel. Our forthcoming National Transport Strategy has climate action as a top priority. It will enable people to make greener and cleaner transport choices to help deliver our net zero target.

This Programme for Government commits us to make key changes across all modes of transport.



Aviation

Aviation emissions remain high and we recognised the need to address this when we confirmed that we would not be progressing with the cut in Air Departure Tax.

Air travel continues to be, however, one of the quickest and most convenient ways to travel, not least to and from our island communities. As a result, we will work to decarbonise scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040. This will position Scotland at the forefront of innovation in advanced aerospace technologies, and is a visible global signal of our commitment to green tourism.

We will support the trialling and introduction of low or zero emission planes operating between airports across the Scottish Highlands and Islands, with the first such trials taking place in 2021. In collaboration with Highlands and Islands Airports Limited, we will also aim to create the world's first zero emission aviation region through a new programme of activity to decarbonise airport operations, infrastructure and flights across the Scottish Highlands and Islands.

Rail

We will decarbonise Scotland's passenger rail services by 2035, ahead of the UK's target of 2040.

Around 75% of Scottish passenger journeys are currently undertaken on electrified lines. Electric rail travel improves journey times and electric trains are more reliable than diesel trains, requiring less maintenance. They make less noise and result in better air quality, bringing benefits to cities and communities across the network.

Work has commenced on the design and development of a number of electrification schemes, with the East Kilbride and Barrhead line prioritised as part of our rolling programme of efficient electrification.

Where we cannot electrify or it is inappropriate to do so, we will invest in battery-powered trains and work with developers of hydrogen fuel cell trains to accelerate their development and deployment through practical trials in Scotland.

Our investment will result in greener, faster, more reliable and more resilient rail services. This will encourage more people to use public transport and result in better connected places within Scotland and beyond.

We will set out detailed timescales and actions for how we will decarbonise rail services in the spring.

Buses

The majority of public transport journeys in Scotland are by bus and people and families on low incomes are more likely to use buses as their main form of transport.

We will bring forward a step change in investment with over £500 million to improve bus priority infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage.

In addition, we will begin to design a scheme next year to reallocate road space to high occupancy vehicles, such as buses, on parts of the motorway around Glasgow.

Our Green Bus Fund has supported the purchase of 475 low emission buses since 2011, with an investment of over £17 million. In April 2019, we introduced a revised green incentive of the Bus Service Operators Grant. This additional subsidy is weighted to the lowest emitting buses, to further support the uptake of ultra-low and zero emission buses.

**Over
£500 million
to make buses the
easier, greener choice**



We recognise that the transformation to a world-leading zero emission fleet will require bold and creative action. With the Scottish National Investment Bank, the bus sector and potential investors we will work to explore the potential for new forms of patient and innovative financing to radically accelerate the pace of deployment of zero emission buses across Scotland.

Public sector fleet

Public sector bodies in Scotland have started decarbonising their fleets and 1,250 ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) will soon be in use across Scotland's local authorities and public sector organisations.

Building on this, we will go further.

We will work with public bodies to phase out petrol and diesel cars from our public sector fleet and phase out the need for any new petrol and diesel light commercial vehicles by 2025.

The market for heavier zero emission vehicles, such as heavy goods vehicles, is less developed than for cars. We will work with public bodies, the automotive sector and Scotland's innovation community to create the conditions to phase out the need for all new petrol and diesel vehicles in Scotland's public sector fleet by 2030. We will apply flexibility and pragmatism for frontline and emergency service and specialist vehicles.

As part of this, we will ensure that the public sector considers whether a vehicle genuinely needs to be replaced like-for-like or whether it could consolidate its fleet, move to a shared vehicle service or switch to active travel.

We will continue to use our Switched on Fleets programme to support the public sector transition to a zero emission fleet, and to help stimulate the growth of Scottish supply chain opportunities.

Electric vehicles

According to the latest figures, there are currently over 12,000 ULEVs registered in Scotland. The rate of growth each quarter has been outpacing the rest of the UK since 2017.

To date, we have provided over £40 million of support to Scottish-based businesses and consumers to purchase ULEVs through our Low Carbon Transport Loan scheme.

We will provide an additional £17 million to support the demand for ULEVs, while expanding the scheme to include used electric vehicles so as many people as possible can experience the benefits of electric vehicles.

Over the past five years, we have funded the development of one of the most comprehensive electric charge point networks in Europe.

Building on this success, we have formed a new Strategic Partnership with our electricity network companies to improve the delivery and integration of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and electricity networks in Scotland.

**An extra
£17 million**
to support the
demand for Ultra Low
Emission Vehicles



We will deliver trial projects with network companies to improve knowledge and demonstrate the critical role they will play in accelerating universal access to key public infrastructure at the lowest overall cost to consumers. This will include a £7.5 million joint demonstration project to trial new and innovative ways to deliver and invest in electric vehicle charging at scale and will support our commitment to create 20 electric towns and cities by 2025.

We will intensify our engagement with industry and key stakeholders to consider and develop new financing and delivery models for electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Scotland.

We will also continue to support the ongoing development of charging infrastructure, and will provide in excess of £20 million to support investment by local authorities, homes and business.

Active travel

We continue to take forward our Active Travel work to make our towns and cities friendlier and safer places for pedestrians and cyclists, supporting more people to make sustainable travel choices, as well as contributing to better health for people across Scotland.

Last year, we doubled our investment in Active Travel to £80 million.

This is enabling walking and cycling infrastructure to be developed across the country. For example, 11 large-scale infrastructure projects are now underway across Scotland, of which the first will be completed in 2020. This is the South City Way which will connect Queens Park in Glasgow's Southside to the heart of the Merchant City. The funding also supports infrastructure such as cycle storage, cycle racks and bicycles and enables urban design projects, behaviour change programmes, education projects and e-bike trials and grants.

We have appointed an Active Nation Commissioner for Scotland who will act as a national advocate for Active Travel and promote its benefits to everyone who lives, works in or visits Scotland.



Low emission zones

We are taking action to tackle air pollution caused by transport.

Although everyone is impacted by poor air quality, it is the most vulnerable people who suffer the greatest impact, namely the very young, the elderly and people with pre-existing health conditions.

We are introducing Low Emission Zones in Scotland. These zones set an environmental limit on certain road spaces, allowing access to only the cleanest vehicles. They will help to transform towns and cities into cleaner and healthier places to live, work and visit.

The first phase of Scotland's first Low Emission Zone (LEZ) was launched in Glasgow last year, with a further phase to commence next year. Plans are progressing to put LEZs in place for Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee by next year and we will consult on LEZ emission standards, including the extent to which future stricter emissions standards can contribute towards encouraging the transition towards lower and zero-carbon forms of transport.

This year, we will continue to help areas to introduce LEZs through our Support Fund. We will make up to £2.5 million available to help commercial and private vehicle owners who face the greatest difficulties in preparing for LEZs to make the change needed, beginning with taxis. We have also begun to install remote sensors on our trunk road network to monitor real-world emissions from vehicles.

We will consult on Scotland's ambition to make the transformative shift to zero or ultra-low emission city centres by 2030 by engaging extensively with key sectors, in particular the bus sector. This work will be undertaken alongside our engagement with industry, our partners and key stakeholders on matters such as investment in electric vehicle charging and innovative financing of zero emission buses.

Supporting transport innovation

We want to make sure that Scotland can realise the full economic benefits of our mission zero commitments. To do that, we will:

- invest £2 million to take ideas for sustainable and zero carbon mobility to fully-formed propositions suitable for large-scale investments
- develop proposals for new centres of expertise for emerging technologies and business models in sustainable mobility
- establish an Expert Advisory Group to advise on how Scotland's automotive sector can benefit from the transition to zero emission vehicles
- establish a new supply chain accelerator programme to help public bodies and commercial partners develop innovative solutions to the challenge of decarbonising public sector vehicle fleets
- work with industry partners to assess the skills the Scottish motor trade will need to support the transition to zero emission mobility
- launch a new Hydrogen Accelerator Programme to attract technical experts to help scale up and quicken the deployment of hydrogen technologies across Scotland, with an emphasis on sustainable mobility

Driving down emissions from buildings and heating

Another key area for immediate action is in how we power and heat our buildings. Emissions from buildings account for around 20% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions. We therefore need to build on, accelerate and scale up our action to reduce emissions from our homes and buildings.

We will publish a Heat Decarbonisation Policy Statement next summer setting out the steps we will need to take to reduce the emissions associated with heating our homes and buildings.

We have already set out an ambitious route map to transform energy efficiency through Energy Efficient Scotland – the £12 billion programme of improvements will make our homes and buildings warmer, greener and more energy efficient.

New homes must use renewable or low carbon heat from 2024



Over the lifetime of this Parliament, we are investing £500 million in energy efficiency.

This Programme for Government commits us to scale up and accelerate existing work so that we reduce emissions from heating our homes and buildings to near-zero by 2045, in line with advice from the Committee on Climate Change.

Decarbonising heat in new buildings

New homes and buildings are already built with high standards of energy efficiency but we need to take further action.

We will consult this year on setting new building standards to be introduced in 2021, updating the regulatory system by improving energy standards for all new buildings. These new standards will set challenging targets to reduce energy demand, and associated carbon emissions, in new buildings.

Over the next year, we will also begin working with the construction sector to develop regulations so that new homes consented from 2024 are required to use renewable or low carbon heat. This is one year earlier than is planned in the rest of the UK.

Similarly, our ambition is to phase in renewable and low carbon heating systems for new non-domestic buildings consented from 2024. We will work with the construction, property and commercial development sectors to identify and support good practice to inform the development of standards on how we can achieve this.

We will set an example with new public sector buildings. We will work with public authorities to establish Net Zero Carbon Standards for new public buildings and make heating them more efficient.

Decarbonising our heat sources and reducing emissions from our buildings

A growing proportion of the heat used in our homes and buildings comes from renewable or low carbon sources. However, there is potential for much greater use of renewable heat sources in Scotland. We can also do more to reduce the demand for heating in the first place by making homes and buildings more energy efficient.

We will launch a new Scottish Low Carbon Heat Funding Invitation through our Low Carbon Innovation Fund, targeting a minimum £30 million of support for renewable heat projects. The invitation will encourage capital projects that demonstrate innovative and low carbon ways of heating our buildings across Scotland, including heat pumps, as well as supporting industrial projects focused on reducing emissions.

This work will be supported by the introduction of the Heat Networks Bill in the coming year.

The Bill will introduce regulation of the heat network sector to support, facilitate and create controls in respect of the development of district and communal heating infrastructure in Scotland.

We recently consulted on whether Energy Efficient Scotland could be accelerated and how this could be achieved in line with a Just Transition. We will respond by the end of the year as part of an updated Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map. In addition, we will set out, and consult on, proposals for accelerating improved energy efficiency in owner-occupied housing. From 1 April 2020 private rented sector landlords will have to meet minimum energy efficiency standards for new tenancies. We will publish an updated position in our Energy Efficient Route Map in December 2019 to accelerate improvements of EPC ratings in our homes.

Local heat and energy efficiency strategies

Communities and local authorities have a critical role to play in ensuring a co-ordinated, place-based approach to decarbonising heat and improving energy efficiency.

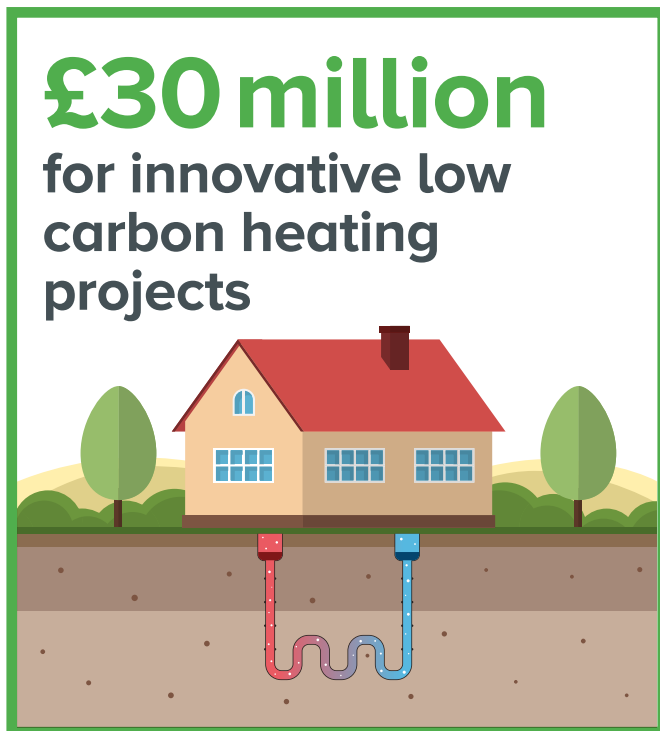
To make sure that communities are empowered and play an active role in planning for low carbon energy systems in ways which work for them, we will publish a Local Energy Policy Statement by the end of this year.

The majority of Scotland's local authorities have piloted the development of Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies. These set out long-term approaches to reducing emissions from buildings and tackling fuel poverty by identifying a solution tailored to the local area, as well as identifying zones suitable for the development of heat networks.



The Heat Networks Bill will introduce regulation for district and communal heating to support its growth in Scotland

This year, we will launch a third round of pilots for those local authorities which have not yet piloted the development of these strategies. The strategies have a vital role in planning our long-term approach to decarbonising the heat supply to our homes and buildings and respond directly to recommendations made by the Committee on Climate Change. We will work with local government to put the strategies on a statutory footing and bring forward the timescale for implementation.



Tackling fuel poverty

While the latest figures for 2017 show that the number of households in fuel poverty is at its lowest level since 2005-06, there is still more to do.

This year, we passed the most ambitious fuel poverty legislation in the UK, setting a target date of 2040 to tackle the root causes of fuel poverty.

To ensure we take the action needed to meet these targets, we will publish a Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2020. We will work with stakeholders and people with lived experience to set out how we will tackle all the drivers of fuel poverty in ways which work for different communities. This includes addressing the issues of low household incomes, unaffordable fuel prices, low levels of energy efficiency and inefficient use of fuel.

We remain on track to deliver on our ambition of creating a new public energy company by summer 2021. It is a long-term and ambitious project which will help us tackle fuel poverty, promote inclusive economic growth and tackle climate change.

We are working with stakeholders to develop detailed proposals for the new company and will say more on our plans in the coming year.

Energy

Renewable energy sources play a key role in decarbonising transport and reducing emissions from heat.

We are building on our work to boost Scotland's energy supply chain. That means continuing to explore every possible option to help put Scottish businesses in a stronger position to secure contracts, and pressing the UK Government to work with us in securing this outcome.

To lead by example and take action to further strengthen the case for investment in renewable energy sources, we will accelerate efforts to use 100% renewable electricity on the Scottish public estate, working with public authorities.

Our next Energy Statement will set out the extent to which renewable and low carbon energy generation will need to combine in order to meet our net zero ambitions and we will monitor progress on an annual basis. We are also developing

plans to consider the contributions which may be necessary across the electricity and wider energy system to help deliver our net zero future. This will form part of a wider review of targets and policies across each of the key sectors of the economy to inform our updated Climate Change Plan.

Hydrogen

Hydrogen technologies are key to our ambitions for decarbonising transport and offer us the opportunity to be at the forefront of global innovation.

Scotland has a favourable reputation as an early adopter and innovation leader in hydrogen initiatives, hosting some of Europe's major demonstration fleets.

To accelerate this, we will undertake a hydrogen assessment project. Working with stakeholders, we will assess the use of hydrogen across various applications and the resources, capability and skills needed to implement them. We will also explore the regulatory levers and barriers to hydrogen production. Informed by that, in the coming year we will publish an action plan for the development of a hydrogen economy.

Offshore wind energy

Scotland has huge offshore wind potential, and we expect the technology to make a significant contribution to our energy and climate change ambitions, while supporting economic development and creating jobs.

We continue to work hard to make Scotland an attractive place to invest in offshore wind energy developments, and will take further steps this year to provide clarity and certainty across the sector. These will include the development of an Offshore Wind Policy Statement, making clear our ambitions for offshore wind, and the steps that we will take to secure as much development and economic benefit as possible.

We will produce our Offshore Renewable Energy Decommissioning Policy Guidance by the end of this year and consult on our draft Sectoral Marine Plan for Offshore Wind in the autumn, with the aim of publishing a final version in 2020.

We have already invested £2 million in innovation and skills to drive down costs and make sure Scotland has the necessary skills in place to take advantage of the opportunities offshore wind has to offer.

We are making a similar sum available again this year to support the offshore wind sector in Scotland. This will include funds to launch a competition with the Carbon Trust inviting bids to address floating offshore wind technology challenges. This will help to de-risk technological solutions, support the Scottish supply chain and help to make floating offshore wind energy generation cost-effective.

Wave and tidal energy

In February, we launched the £10 million Saltire Tidal Energy Challenge Fund, with £3.4 million from the Fund already awarded to help build the world's most powerful floating tidal turbine.

This year, we have also provided a further £10 million to the Wave Energy Scotland programme, taking the total level of support to the wave energy sector to nearly £40 million since 2014. With this support, Wave Energy Scotland will launch two new Scottish wave energy prototypes at the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney in summer 2020.

Through this funding, and collaboration with the sector through the Scottish Marine Energy Industry Working Group, we will continue to champion marine energy and support the research, development, innovation and demonstration that will maintain Scotland's competitive advantage.

Bioenergy

Bioenergy has the potential to play a significant role in the decarbonisation of our energy system and in supporting certain industries to decarbonise their processes.

We will consult on a draft bioenergy action plan later this year and publish a final version in May 2020. The plan will set out how we will take advantage of the opportunities bioenergy has to offer while making sure that it is implemented sustainably and in line with our other priorities.

Reducing emissions from oil and gas

Our continued support for oil and gas exploration and production in the North Sea will now be conditional upon a sustainable, secure and inclusive energy transition. This will include an increased net zero investment by industry and government.

Reducing emissions from the extraction of offshore oil and gas will make a significant contribution to tackling global climate change, particularly if technologies applied in the North Sea can be exported and deployed in other countries.

To drive this change, we will support in principle the Oil and Gas Technology Centre's plans to establish a new Net Zero Solution Centre, enabling the North Sea to become the first net zero hydrocarbon basin in the world.

This centre will support the development and deployment of carbon capture, utilisation and storage, hydrogen and renewables technologies that can be integrated with existing offshore oil and gas infrastructure. On completion of a business case analysis, we will confirm our funding contribution and call on the UK Government to co-invest.

Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS)

CCUS is an industrial-scale decarbonisation system which has the potential to make a big impact on our emissions targets. Scotland's key CCUS resource is the vast potential for CO₂ storage in the North Sea. With the existing oil and gas infrastructure, it is the most cost-effective place to begin CCUS in the UK.

We will explore with partners their proposals on CCUS and this will inform our Scottish public sector response to the UK consultation on CCUS business models. We will also work with the Scottish National Investment Bank to explore how to support the full-scale commercial deployment of CCUS in Scotland. Alongside this, we will take forward a number of actions to support and promote CCUS, including support for the Acorn project at St Fergus and the emerging Scottish industry-led CCUS alliance.

The UK Government has committed to deliver UK-wide policy frameworks and deployment pathways for CCUS. This clarity is needed by industry and we will continue to press the UK Government to publish these by the end of 2019.

Reducing emissions from business and industry

The UK Committee on Climate Change recognises that eliminating emissions from industry is a particularly challenging task. However, it is confident that such emissions can be reduced to much lower levels by switching to low carbon fuels, using carbon capture, utilisation and storage and making industry more efficient, reducing material and energy input levels.

Reducing emissions from industry requires efforts to reduce energy inefficiency in industrial processes and a rethink of how materials are consumed and reused. Much of this requires radical new approaches, supported by innovation and technological advancement.

Our first step is to lead by example.

Scottish Water

Scottish Water, our publicly-owned water company and the biggest electricity purchaser in Scotland, will commit to being a zero carbon user of electricity by 2040 – five years before our net zero target.

Scottish Water currently produces or hosts renewable energy schemes that generate twice as much energy as it uses. As part of its contribution to the climate emergency, it will commit to produce or host three times as much as its usage – i.e. over 1,300 GWh, by 2030.

It will also take a number of actions to consider how its operations can support lower emissions for both Scottish Water and its partners by:

- being a leader in bio-gas generation and recovery of heat from sewers, building on projects such as the Stirling District Heat Network
- exploring how to maximise the role its land and catchments can play in capturing and storing carbon whilst supporting biodiversity through, for example, tree planting and protecting peatland
- accelerating further the search for and testing of new technology to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from its processes, fleet and buildings
- investing in reducing its non-recyclable waste, reducing its chemical usage and increasing biodiversity on its assets

The Scottish Government has asked Scottish Water to take the lead in setting out and pursuing action towards a vision that will ensure Scotland's water sector will help secure a sustainable future and inspire a Hydro Nation.

Scottish Water will share and demonstrate the approaches it has taken to reduce energy use and generate renewable energy with the public sector in Scotland and in particular seek partnerships around heat from sewers and bio-gas production. It will also take action in climate adaptation and pursue further partnerships with local authorities and others to adapt to increased intensity rainfall events by creating natural, blue/green infrastructure to manage surface water away from homes and businesses and help create great places to live.

Supporting businesses to reduce emissions

We will take action to optimise our existing support so that Scotland's industrial sites are better positioned to access funding opportunities that will help them to deliver emissions savings, whilst remaining internationally competitive and avoiding carbon leakage.

Industrial projects will be able to bid into the Low Carbon Innovation Fund and we are working with partners to encourage a pipeline of industry projects focused on reducing emissions.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency has developed a range of sector plans to drive industry compliance with environmental regulations. The plans encourage sectors and businesses to go 'beyond compliance' and work collaboratively on a voluntary basis to reduce energy efficiency and the use of material and water resources.

Our new online single entry point for business will include specific information and tools to help businesses respond to net zero and we will host a Mission Zero Business Summit at the start of October this year. In addition, a new partnership between Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage will bring together business support and environmental and regulatory services around the needs of businesses and the opportunities of net zero.

Help for businesses to respond to net zero



It will start by working with around 20 businesses who have identified rapid growth opportunities from transitioning to net zero. This work will also identify the best ways to help other businesses on their journeys including how they:

- address waste and material flows
- improve the efficiency of transport and energy use
- identify new market opportunities
- reinvent business models and processes to become more circular

Construction and net zero

The construction sector uses considerable natural resources and is the largest contributor to waste in Scotland.

Given this, and our ambitions around infrastructure, the built environment, heat and associated public sector investment, we will prioritise work with the Scottish construction sector to ensure it is ready to realise the opportunities of our wider ambition and make its own contribution to net zero.

Working through the Scottish Government Construction Scotland Leadership Group, with the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre and the wider sector, we will set out a phased and collaborative approach to reducing the sector's direct and indirect output of greenhouse gases. This will include benefits to be realised from design, products and materials used, waste reduction and elimination, whole life costing and maintenance. We will use all of our levers to support this phased approach and support the sector and those who buy from it with evidence, case studies and learning and development opportunities to help them make the necessary transition.

Innovating for net zero

We will also intensify support and funding from our enterprise agencies for research and development and innovation in low carbon technologies, processes, products and services.

The additional funding of £15 million per year for research and development grants announced in our 2017 Programme for Government will be increasingly focused on low and zero carbon. We will also use programmes like the Can Do Challenge Fund and Civtech to drive low carbon innovation in the public sector, creating new opportunities and new markets for businesses across Scotland.

Building on the success of our Unlocking Ambition programme, which has supported 40 of Scotland's most promising and ambitious entrepreneurs, Unlocking Ambition 2 will seek to prioritise applications which will create businesses which support a low carbon economy.

We will continue to prioritise the Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc, a joint venture between Michelin, Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise to deliver Scotland's centre for driving innovation and investment in sustainable mobility and low carbon energy, giving a significant boost to Scotland's journey to net zero.

It will provide business and industry with support packages containing a mix of grants, loans and incentives as well as competitive rates, space and expertise for innovation and prototypes. To make sure that this support is at the cutting edge of technological and industrial expertise, it will be backed up by partnerships with colleges, universities and industry experts.

The Parc will also include an Advanced Skills Academy to help to develop the workforce of the future, delivering bespoke packages covering data, digital, creativity and innovation, as well as core technical skills.

Delivering the skills needed for net zero

To make sure that we reap the rewards of our new approaches to investment, we need to build the right skills in Scotland's workforce. It is also essential to make sure that our workers now and in the future have the skills they need to secure high quality and sustainable jobs so that they can share in the benefits of the transition to a net zero economy.

Scotland already has many of the skills we will need as our economy transitions, including in finance and investment, energy, engineering, construction and chemical science.

However, many of these roles are becoming more complex and, as technology changes rapidly and investment flows into Scotland, we will need a comprehensive approach to what education, skills development and training our system provides.

Working with Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council, we will develop and publish a Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan. First, we will gather the evidence we need to make the right investments in our skills system, such as where there are current skills shortages and where there might be shortages in the future.

Based on this evidence, we will set out a framework for skills investment, including how we will:

- maximise the opportunities for people to upskill and reskill within the energy system, moving into areas such as oil and gas decommissioning, offshore wind energy and energy systems management
- give people the skills needed to support the changes in the construction and energy efficiencies of our buildings and manufacturing and the decarbonisation of our transport system
- create a supportive and collaborative business environment for research and innovation in new low carbon industries so that we can be ahead of the game and able to prepare for the new skills that will be needed

The framework will set out clearly how government and other public bodies will work with further and higher education, as well as businesses and industry.

In the meantime, we will refocus existing work and take forward new actions to build the skills base we need for the transition.

The National Manufacturing Institute (NMIS) Skills Academy will provide a comprehensive service for business, industry and the public sector. This will include a drive to embed circular economy skills and thinking in future workforce training.

Working alongside the new Advanced Skills Academy at the Michelin Scotland Innovation Parc, the two academies will develop and meet future skills needs in advanced and digital manufacturing, creativity and innovation as well as services for sustainable mobility.

Our support for manufacturing will help businesses take advantage of the new supply chain opportunities created as, for example, we and other countries seek to decarbonise our heat and transport systems. This will be a key area of focus as we work with businesses, our enterprise and skills agencies and with universities and colleges to develop and deliver a single and integrated programme of support and development for manufacturing in Scotland. Supporting manufacturing businesses to make the transition to net zero and realise the opportunities of a low carbon economy will be at the heart of this programme.

We will support a new 'Climate Solutions' course and qualification for public and private sector leaders. It will give them the further skills and knowledge they need to drive climate change action. We will support at least 100 training places on the course, which has been developed by the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.

Circular economy and tackling throw-away culture

For Scotland to become a net zero society, we need to think about how we use and reuse materials and how we handle waste.

We will shortly consult on the draft proposals for inclusion in the new Circular Economy Bill, bringing forward this legislation in the coming year. It will embed an innovative approach to reducing, reusing and recycling materials and help to deal with items that we know cause environmental harm.

The provisions in the Bill will enable charges to be applied in relation to the provision of items such as single-use drinks cups, helping to tackle the 4,000 tonnes of waste beverage cups create in Scotland each year, and create a new penalty for littering from vehicles.



The Circular Economy Bill will encourage the re-use of products and reduce waste

Reuse and recycle

Our new Deposit Return scheme is the first national scheme of its type in the UK. It will reduce the £46 million spent each year on litter removal. The carbon savings of the scheme are expected to be equivalent to taking 85,000 cars off our roads.

Over the next few months, we will develop and refine the regulations needed for implementation. We aim to deliver the scheme by 2021.

We have already taken action on single use plastics in Scotland and will continue to do so.

We are aiming to meet or exceed the standards set out in the European Union's Single Use Plastic Directive. We will shortly consult on raising the minimum amount for the single-use carrier bag charge from 5p to 10p with the intention of bringing forward the required legislation in the coming year. We have taken action to reduce the use of plastic cotton buds and microbeads and will take further action by banning more problematic single use plastic items, such as cutlery, plates and food and drink containers, by 2021. We will take equality interests into account and apply exemptions where appropriate.

Across Scotland in 2017, we recycled more than we sent to landfill and the overall volume of recycling in Scotland has increased. We are meeting our European Union targets to reduce waste sent to landfill and our target on the percentage of construction and demolition waste being recycled or prepared for reuse. Eighty per cent of households now have access to food recycling collections and take-up of household food waste recycling has increased from 26% in 2012 to 55% in 2017.

However, there is more to do. Scottish waste legislation is underpinned by the waste hierarchy, with waste prevention ranked as the most favourable option. We will consider possible measures which will stop certain materials, such as textiles and food, from entering the waste stream at source.

By the end of this year, we will:

- host a recycling summit to bring together senior leaders across the public and private sectors to identify opportunities to accelerate the pace of progress towards Scotland's ambitious recycling targets and ensure a more consistent, efficient and easier to understand approach to recycling
- in partnership with COSLA, establish a strategic steering group between Scottish and local government to identify opportunities to support delivery and further enhance or transform strategic approaches to waste and household recycling
- begin evaluation of the Scottish Household Recycling Charter

Over the course of next year, we will also:

- consult on new legislation required to meet recent amendments to European waste directives including the addition of textiles to the list of recyclable waste materials which require separate collection
- review the Scottish Household Recycling Charter's supporting Code of Practice
- explore opportunities to place requirements on businesses to publicly report on their waste and surplus, specifically in regard to food and textiles
- launch a second phase of our food waste marketing campaign
- consult on the current rural exemption for food waste collections
- review the food waste separation requirements
- consult on an obligation for food retail sites, over a certain size, to redistribute edible products in line with the food waste hierarchy

Scotland's land

Scotland's land plays a critical role in our response to the global climate emergency. In response, we are stepping up our activity.

At a national level, we will commission independent advice on options for changing land use patterns and practices within Scotland to optimise the role that our rural land use, including agriculture and forestry, plays in achieving our national climate change targets.



We will make regional land use plans for maximising the potential of every part of Scotland's land to contribute to the fight against climate change. To do this, we will develop proposals for implementing regional partnerships and frameworks. Based on these proposals, we will work to enable regional land use partnerships to emerge locally by 2021. Each partnership will be tasked with creating a regional land use framework by 2023 that identifies where resource can have the biggest climate impact.

These national and regional efforts will help us to develop an integrated and strategic approach to sustainable land use. This will have the potential to transform the ways in which government and the public sector invest in the rural economy and support the contribution that rural land can make to a range of economic, societal, climate change and biodiversity outcomes. This work will also help us to plan for what arrangements we may need to put in place should we leave the EU.

We will also work with the Scottish Land Commission to explore ways to ensure that the Land Use Strategy and the Statement of Land Rights and Responsibilities support our efforts to tackle climate change. In addition, we will look at legislative options to give weight to the recommendations of the Scottish Land Commission.

We are committing to the development of a national nitrogen balance sheet. The establishment of this balance sheet will allow us to better understand Scotland's nitrogen cycle and allow us to take a systemic approach to improving nitrogen use efficiency and reducing nitrogen waste throughout the entire economy.

We will set out further action on Scotland's land in the update to the Climate Change Plan which will be published next year.

Farming and food production

Climate change is both a challenge and an opportunity for farming in Scotland. The climate and landscape which makes Scotland one of the world's leading producers of quality meat and livestock also generates emissions.

Already, our agricultural sector is playing its part in reducing emissions. Through a range of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) schemes, we have been supporting farmers and crofters to modernise and transition to a sustainable low carbon future.

But we must pick up the pace of change. We will create a new Agricultural Transformation Programme for farming and food production focused on sustainability, simplicity, profitability, innovation, inclusion and productivity, while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. While funding of this package of actions will be considered as part of future rural support, work will begin this year to:

- develop pilot schemes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture
- encourage more tree planting across Scotland including woodland integration and agro-forestry on Scottish farms
- promote the multiple benefits of good grassland management to more livestock farmers
- encourage more farmers to invest in renewable energy, including bio-energy, to meet their energy needs
- support an evidence-based approach to crop production and selection and strategic development of organic farming
- explore the development of models to demonstrate and promote carbon neutral farms

Peatlands

Scotland's vast areas of peatland provide a significant natural sink of CO₂ when left undisturbed. Our peatlands need to be healthy to realise the benefits to climate change of reducing emissions and other benefits including to air and water quality, biodiversity and habitat creation and flood alleviation.

While almost 20,000 hectares of peatlands have been restored by our Peatland Action initiative, many of Scotland's peatlands are not in good condition.

This year we are investing a total of £14 million to fund projects to restore degraded peatlands. To address activity that impacts some of our peatlands and reduces their carbon store, we will seek to phase out the use of horticultural peat by increasing uptake of alternative growing media substrate.

Forestry

Scotland planted 84% of the new woodland created in the UK in 2018-19 and we have exceeded our annual planting target of 10,000 hectares. In the coming year, we will seek to plant 12,000 hectares. To support this, we will make an additional £5 million available for woodland and forestry creation to support its contribution to tackling climate change.

While we already have ambitious targets for tree planting which take us to 15,000 hectares by 2025, we anticipate accelerating progress towards that and setting increased targets beyond 2021. We will consult stakeholders on what is ambitious but also achievable. Key to this will be receiving clarity on future funding from the UK Government – they have failed to provide this so far and we will continue to press for it.

This year, we will plant a new woodland to recognise the contribution of foresters from the British Honduran Forestry Unit and the wider Commonwealth to Scotland's forests and to commemorate the centenary of the 1919 Forestry Act.

We will complete work responding to the review of arrangements to ensure efficiency and consistency in grant-making for new planting.

Small-scale rural and forestry businesses form the majority of beneficiaries of the Forestry Grants Scheme. However, a significant amount of publicly-funded planting is done by larger commercial and private forestry companies. This year, we will continue work to ensure that woodland creation and forest management by businesses of all sizes enhances community benefit across Scotland.

We have already begun to upgrade and modernise our forestry fleet, providing new electric vehicles to sites across Scotland. By 2021, we plan to increase the proportion of electric vehicles from 2% to 10% of the forestry fleet.

**12,000
hectares
new woodland**



Our natural environment and biodiversity

Our natural environment is central to our response to the global climate emergency, to a successful, sustainable economy and to our national identity. Providing opportunities to enjoy the outdoors is also essential to our wellbeing and that of future generations.

We will make sure that our work helps to improve health outcomes and promote outdoor learning and volunteering, as well as inspire people to love nature in some of the world's most iconic landscapes.

We made a commitment to protect our natural environment, and the habitats and species that depend on it, when we signed up to the *UN Sustainable Development Goals* and embedded them in Scotland's *National Performance Framework*.

We will set out our new overarching approach to environmental protection through our Environment Strategy. It will be a living and evolving strategy, able to adapt to new evidence as it emerges and refocus work to take advantage of new opportunities or address new challenges. We will set out our working vision for the Environment Strategy in the coming months.

Biodiversity

We recognise the importance of biodiversity and the complexities and challenges that tackling its loss presents. Biodiversity loss and the climate emergency are intimately bound together: nature plays a key role in defining and regulating our climate and climate is key in shaping the state of nature.

We continue to deliver on our Biodiversity Strategy and work towards achieving the 'Aichi' 2020 international targets – 79 different pieces of work are underway to help us to meet these and we will publish a further report on our progress by April next year.

To boost work to achieve the targets, last year our Biodiversity Challenge Fund made up to £2 million available over a two-year period to improve habitats, safeguard species and encourage increased access to nature. The Fund was almost entirely committed in the first year and so we will make an additional £2 million available, funding further important projects which address biodiversity loss and climate change.

We are carefully considering the recent IPBES global biodiversity assessment and, by the end of this year, we will write to Parliament with our initial assessment of our current activity, what more needs to be done and what we need to do differently.

This will inform a step change in our programme of work to address biodiversity loss, which will take account of the new post-2020 international biodiversity framework and targets to be agreed at a Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties in China in late 2020.

Scotland is playing an active role in this international work and, in April, we will host an international workshop on tackling biodiversity loss and addressing its links with climate change.

We will continue to support the Central Scotland Green Network, Europe's largest greenspace development. We will work with communities this year on projects which will benefit ecosystems and waterways and open Scotland's natural environment to more people.

We will publish a blueprint for the network, providing a targeted map that identifies the best opportunities for greenspace projects that will deliver the biggest climate change and biodiversity benefits to communities across the central belt. We will also promote healthy pollinator populations in central Scotland by developing the B-Lines project to form a framework for a pollinator network.

We are working with partners to reduce the risks posed and the negative impacts caused by invasive non-native species in Scotland, one of the five biggest drivers of biodiversity loss.

We will develop a strategic approach to wildlife management that puts animal welfare at the centre while protecting public health and economic and conservation considerations. We will publish a set of principles next year. In addition, we will respond to the independent reviews on grouse moor management and deer management and publish a new Honey Bee Health Strategy in 2020.

Access to the outdoors

By the end of 2019, we will have delivered over 105 miles of new and improved paths since 2015, making it easier for walkers, wheelchair users, cyclists, horse riders and buggy users to enjoy our fantastic countryside.

Greening of the urban environment improves quality of life in our towns and cities, enhances their environmental performance and climate resilience, as well as supporting regeneration and acting as a catalyst for economic investment.

We are taking action to make sure that people in our urban areas are able to benefit from nature and nature-based solutions to climate change. The Green Infrastructure Strategic Intervention Programme, supported by the European Regional Development Fund, will continue to enhance greenspace and create more opportunities for people in some of our most disadvantaged communities to enjoy the outdoors and improve their health and wellbeing.

Clean air enhances our enjoyment of the outdoors and is essential to protecting our health as well as our natural environment. An independent steering group has reviewed our Clean Air Strategy and we have published their recommendations. We will consult on these and the outcome will inform our revised proposals for a new air quality strategy in 2020.

Protecting our marine environment and species

Scotland is home to a third of the EU's breeding seabirds of international importance and their status is an important indicator for assessing the state of our marine environment. Populations of 12 species of breeding seabirds in Scotland have declined, with climate change likely to be a contributing factor.

We are taking forward our work on the Seabird Conservation Strategy and will consult on our proposals and adopt the final strategy in 2020.

In the coming year, we will designate the site of a new national deep sea marine reserve, to the West of Scotland, taking an important step forward in the protection of vulnerable deep sea habitats and species.

We have consulted on the creation of four new Marine Protected Areas and will designate sites early next year, contributing to the protection of biodiversity and geodiversity such as Risso's dolphins, minke whales and Scotland's marine geomorphology.

We will designate two historic sites – the Queen of Sweden wreck near Shetland and the wartime history of Scapa Flow.

To further protect Scotland's marine wildlife, we will:

- consult on a UK-wide dolphin and porpoise conservation strategy later in the autumn
- undertake the second review of the seal licensing system by September 2020
- update our Marine Litter Strategy in 2020, increasing focus on litter removal alongside litter prevention
- develop a new marine mammal science strategy by spring next year
- update Scotland's Marine Atlas in 2020

As well as providing a habitat for many species, our marine environment plays an important role in helping to absorb carbon.

Next year, we will begin publishing the results from our research programme into carbon sequestration in the marine environment and establish a new virtual centre to co-ordinate marine climate change science and research in response to the global climate emergency.

We will also publish a multi-year national wild Atlantic salmon strategy by September 2020.

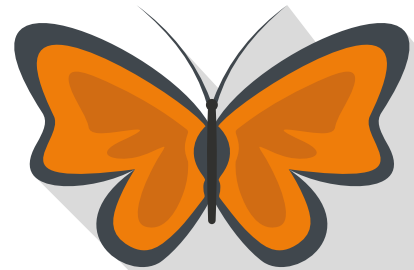
Many water bodies in Scotland are damaged by the legacy of historical engineering work such as embankments and weirs, preventing them from providing habitats for fish and from being enjoyed by communities.

With the support of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, we have established a Water Environment Fund to support restoration projects. In the past year it contributed to work which will restore 543km of fish access to Scotland's water bodies.

Work on the River Almond is allowing migratory fish to swim freely in the river for the first time in generations. The investment has also supported work on improvements to the River Nith which is helping to manage flooding and creating a biodiverse and ecologically-functional river corridor.

We will publish an assessment of our progress towards achieving our ambitions for Scotland's water environment by the end of this year.

£2 million Biodiversity Challenge Fund



A joint endeavour

Scotland's transition to net zero will affect every part of society from the types of jobs we do to the way we travel, what we eat and how we heat our homes.

The Big Climate Conversation is engaging people, businesses and the public sector across the country to let people have their say and help us to update the Climate Change Plan.

Once the update has been published next year, we will establish a National Forum on Climate Change to continue the conversation and bring together Scotland's businesses, public sector, communities and individuals to help to contribute to the decisions we will all have to take.



Later this year, we will consult on amending the statutory duties that require public sector bodies to report annually on their emissions reductions to ensure that those duties help to drive the step change in action that is needed. We will also publish the outcome of the review of our Climate Challenge Fund and our plans for evolving the Fund to support communities to tackle climate change.

We will use the information from the Big Climate Conversation to help us update our statutory Climate Change Behaviours Framework. It will provide guidance on the behaviour changes the Committee on Climate Change is clear that we will all need to make to help Scotland reach net zero. The new framework will be published in 2020.

The UK Government announced on 9 September that, if it is successful in its bid to host the international climate negotiations, UNFCCC COP26, in December 2020, the host city will be Glasgow.

Given Scotland's leadership in climate action and Glasgow's strong track record it is only natural that this should be the case. If the bid is successful, we will work with the UK Government and local and international stakeholders on how the views and contributions of sub-national governments and non-governmental organisations are represented in the negotiating process.

Climate change adaptation

We need to be prepared to manage the impacts of climate change that we are experiencing already, as well as prepare for impacts that we will feel in the longer term.

Later this month, we will publish our new, statutory, five-year Climate Change Adaptation Programme. It will set out around 170 policies and proposals centred around our communities, climate justice, the economy, Scotland's infrastructure and supporting systems, our natural, coastal and marine environments and our international partnerships. The Programme is designed to address priority risks for Scotland and a number of research projects to help us better understand the action we will need to take.

In the meantime, we will continue to invest £42 million each year for flood protection measures, in addition to funding flood warning and forecasting systems and working on the resilience of our water supply, transport, health services, natural environment, forestry, peatlands and agriculture.

Later this year, we will launch a two-year action plan to promote flood resilient repairs and property level flood protection to make sure that property owners are aware of, and take up, the support available to them.

With increased temperatures and changes to our weather, there is an increased risk of wildfire in Scotland. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will develop a wildfires strategy to ensure it can respond to these new and increased risks.





Chapter 2

A SUCCESSFUL, FAIR AND GREEN ECONOMY



A 'no deal' Brexit remains the most significant challenge that our country faces. Whilst this uncertainty is a serious threat to our economy and a challenge to business, we are taking every possible measure to increase our resilience and strengthen the foundations of our economy.

As set out in our Economic Action Plan, we continue to deliver on our long-term commitment to investment – in tackling climate change, improving the wellbeing of our people, encouraging innovation, adopting new technology, creating world-class infrastructure and delivering skills for the future.

Over the coming parliamentary year, the Infrastructure Investment Plan, Capital Spending Review and Climate Change Plan will further reinforce that direction – all of these landmark publications will help us to create the conditions for a fair and green economy.

In the year ahead we will invest more than £5 billion in infrastructure projects and, beginning in 2021, we will invest £1 billion in our schools to deliver real transformation to communities around Scotland.

We will make £130 million available this year to set up the Scottish National Investment Bank, readying Scotland for a shift in how government and business work together to drive investment.

We will continue to support businesses to innovate, providing £37 million of funding per year for research and development.

We will continue to look outwards to our key international markets. As a parallel to our Export Plan, we will put in place a Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Growth Plan setting out how we will grow FDI and secure inward investment which helps to build expertise in green and sustainable technologies and sectors, as well as address major global challenges around ageing and wellbeing. Our enhanced export plan is now focusing on the sectors, markets and businesses where we will have the greatest impact.

The Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board, along with our own engagement, has highlighted that skills are a top priority for business. That is why our Future Skills Action Plan sets out a vision for Scotland's skills system and details how we will work proactively with business to address current and future skills shortages.

We remain firmly committed to an economy in which everyone has the opportunity to contribute and benefit from growth. We will continue to make Scotland's workplaces fairer through our work to reduce the disability employment gap, tackle the gender pay gap and demonstrate leadership in tackling race inequality in employment.

There is still much to do, but our work this year will provide further investment in our economy's foundations and enable us to grasp the opportunities ahead.

Scotland's infrastructure

We have committed to the most ambitious long-term level of infrastructure spend ever in Scotland, steadily increasing annual investment so that our investment this year of £5.2 billion will reach £6.7 billion by the end of the next Parliament.

£1 billion school investment programme



This is a long-term commitment to boosting our international competitiveness, protecting and creating jobs. It also underpins our efforts to tackle climate change and improve quality of life for people across Scotland.

This year, our investment of more than £5 billion will support provision of affordable housing, five new NHS elective care centres and contribute to City Region and Growth Deals, as well as help us to achieve our zero carbon ambitions by providing essential funding to Energy Efficient Scotland and active travel initiatives.

Beginning in 2021, we will invest a further £1 billion of capital investment in our schools, benefiting around 50,000 pupils across Scotland. This is in addition to the 60,000 who, by the end of next year, will have seen their schools renewed or refurbished since 2009 through the existing Schools for the Future programme. This significant investment will

deliver digitally-enabled, low carbon schools and campuses providing benefits to pupils and the local economy.

The Infrastructure Investment Commission for Scotland will publish its advice on priorities by the end of this year. Its advice will help us to identify key strategic investments that will boost economic growth and support public services, while helping us to achieve our ambitions for a zero carbon economy.

We will set out our plans for the next five years, including the next Infrastructure Investment Plan, early in 2020. The key priority of the Plan will be low carbon infrastructure, sending a strong signal to investors that Scotland is creating the conditions for green growth.

Investment

We are readying Scotland for a shift in how government and business work together to drive investment.

Following the introduction of legislation to establish and capitalise the Scottish National Investment Bank, we will invest a minimum of £2 billion over 10 years in our businesses and communities. This year, we will provide £130 million to set up the Bank. We will continue to work with stakeholders to develop its key missions, the primary one of which will be securing the transition to net zero.

A key element of the Bank's work will be to help to shape and develop commercially-investable low carbon markets. As well as opening up significant new investment opportunities, the Bank will work with businesses to identify opportunities and break down barriers to green investment.

We are working closely with advisers on developing the other areas of focus for the Bank. They may be:

- responding to the pressures of an ageing population and supporting the health of the whole population
- place-making and local regeneration

The Bank's missions will have been finalised by the time the Bank makes its first investments next year.

The Building Scotland Fund, the precursor to the Bank, has agreed investments of £94 million so far across a range of housing, regeneration, industrial and commercial projects. It will invest a further £56 million or more by March 2021, helping to trial some approaches to investment that the Bank could take in the future.

As well as this, the Bank will build on other initiatives currently underway such as the Scottish Growth Scheme and the equity investments activities of Scottish Enterprise, helping to simplify the investment landscape for businesses and private investors.

As of the end of July this year, 201 companies have received £135 million of investment in loans and equity under the Scottish Growth Scheme.

Supporting businesses

Scotland continues to be an excellent place to do business. According to a report updating the Global Entrepreneurship Index for Scotland, our business support ecosystem is a global leader, ahead of other UK nations and we have a highly-qualified and highly-skilled workforce.

Businesses told us that they want it to be easier to get information, advice and support at the right time. By the end of 2019, businesses will be able to access products and services from our enterprise and skills agencies, as well as Business Gateway, through an online single entry point currently being developed under the leadership of the Enterprise and Skills Strategic Board and in close collaboration with businesses.

Net Zero Mission for Scottish National Investment Bank



In 2020, the single entry point will expand and connect to every source of government business support. This will make all products and services offered to businesses by public sector organisations visible and available in one place online.

Last year, the Economic Action Plan set out a number of measures specifically designed to support rural businesses and drive positive outcomes for people and communities. Between 2015 and 2018, over £119 million has been invested in nearly 1,500 community-based or micro-enterprise projects in the rural economy.

The National Council of Rural Advisers recommended that a new approach to business support be developed to ensure that the true potential of the rural economy is realised. This year, we will test a place-based approach to integrated business support for micro-enterprises operating in rural areas, recognising the different challenges they face such as access to markets, connectivity issues and employment patterns. The new approach will deliver flexible support that is tailored to the needs of the business and its geographical location.

Supporting entrepreneurship

We continue to support our entrepreneurs. We have delivered the first Unlocking Ambition programme, with some of Scotland's most promising entrepreneurs receiving a range of specialist business development training and support. In the new phase, we will seek to prioritise applications which will create businesses which support a low carbon economy.

We continue to support enterprise education in schools and colleges, offering young people the opportunity to achieve their entrepreneurial potential. We have invested in a range of measures to support female entrepreneurship and are seeing a significant rise in the proportion of women starting a business and a reduction in the gender gap in entrepreneurship.

Supporting innovation and adoption of technology

Businesses that innovate are central to achieving our economic and social ambitions as they enable growth and create high quality jobs.

We are creating flagship centres of innovation, such as the Michelin Innovation Parc, and the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS). We are investing in the evidence base for Mobility as a Service to provide innovative solutions to reduce reliance on private cars by integrating different modes of transport and providing information and payment functions in a single mobility system.

We are encouraging advances in Connected and Autonomous Vehicles or driverless vehicles. These vehicles can communicate with their surrounding environment, enabling safe and efficient movement of people and goods. We are supporting an autonomous bus trial on trunk roads between Fife and Edinburgh starting next year. Our programme of innovation centres also includes £13.5 million support for the Data Lab. Combined with the radical action we are taking to accelerate progress to net zero emissions, these actions are creating the conditions needed for innovation in Scotland.

We are focused on hitting our target of doubling business investment in research and development (R&D) to £1.75 billion by 2025. Last year, we provided £37 million to co-fund R&D projects and, in 2019-20 and 2020-21, at least £37 million will again be available. We will now simplify and streamline our R&D support, providing a single application route for businesses, and target research calls to support the transition to a zero carbon economy.

We have signed a memorandum of understanding with Nesta, a leading innovation foundation. We will work together with them to develop strategic innovation projects across the economy and the public sector that put Scotland on the map as a global leader in applying new ideas to tackle important problems.



Driving innovation in manufacturing

We continue to take action to make Scotland world-renowned for inventing, designing, developing and manufacturing key products and technologies.

Manufacturing accounts for 54% of Scotland's international exports and employs 185,000 people. It has higher average wages than the service sector and tends to distribute jobs more widely across the country, making it a key contributor to our inclusive economic growth ambitions.

The first phase of NMIS, the Lightweight Manufacturing Centre, opened in June this year. It provides Scottish industry with the skills and services needed to put it at the forefront of lightweight manufacturing and materials and helps companies of all sizes to compete globally.

In the coming year, construction will begin on the NMIS. Our £48 million investment secures the creation of a digital factory in Renfrewshire which will work with an extended network of existing and planned facilities. These will work with business to develop new processes and technologies to help them overcome manufacturing challenges or take advantage of new opportunities. It will also include a skills academy to provide advanced manufacturing training and upskilling and support the embedding of circular economy skills in future workforce training.

Over the coming year, we will further develop that network of facilities by investing the first tranche of the £14 million Advancing Manufacturing Challenge Fund. Facilities and services will target small and medium manufacturing businesses to advance their research, develop new products, improve their productivity and upskill their workforce so that they have the right tools and resources to lead the way in this rapidly evolving marketplace.

We will also launch the First Minister's Award for Manufacturing Leadership to recognise the importance of leadership in the sector to improve efficiency and productivity and encourage collaboration and inclusivity.

Industrial biotechnology

Industrial biotechnology is an emerging sector in Scotland, with potential for major growth.

It is replacing existing pharmaceuticals, chemicals and fuels with sustainable, non-fossil-based alternatives, giving it potential to help us meet our climate change targets.

We will continue our support for the Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre, with further funding of up to £11.1 million agreed up to 2023. We are working with the Centre and industry to deliver on the National Plan for Industrial Biotechnology. The Plan aims to increase the number of companies active in industrial biotechnology to over 200 and achieve turnover of £900 million. Progress reported earlier this year highlighted that the number of active companies and value of sales have doubled.

Life sciences

We will continue to develop and drive close links between industry, academia and the health sector in order to support improved wellbeing and inclusive economic growth.

The life sciences sector employs 37,000 people in highly-skilled work in Scotland and it is able to inform and support our responses to emerging global trends such as the ageing population, proliferation of chronic diseases and increasing pressures on healthcare. The sector contributes to new digital technologies, advances in genomics, big data and precision medicine and is a key player in driving high-value medical manufacturing.

In partnership with the UK Government and industry, the new £56 million Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre will offer pharmaceutical companies, from start-ups through to multinationals, a unique opportunity to collaboratively develop and adopt novel manufacturing techniques into their own manufacturing processes and supply chains.

The space sector

Scotland already punches well above its weight in the space sector. Businesses based here employ 18% of the UK's space sector workforce and Scotland produces more small satellites than any other country in Europe.

Our ambition is for Scotland to become the first country in Europe to provide an end-to-end solution for small satellite manufacture, launch and innovation in satellite data analysis, including critical earth observation and environmental data.

We aim to develop launch capability – both vertical and horizontal – to serve small satellite producers, with plans for spaceports in Sutherland and Prestwick. This is powered by investment through Highlands & Islands Enterprise and the Ayrshire Growth Deal respectively, forming a key part of our ambition.

Scotland's ambition is to have £4 billion of the global space sector market by 2030 and we will work with the Scottish Space Leadership Council and other partners to achieve this.

Digital and Data

Digital technology is transforming the way we live. There is now a huge opportunity to ensure that people and businesses are given the tools and skills they need to harness this potential.

Digital infrastructure

We are delivering world-class digital infrastructure which will deliver huge social, economic and environmental benefits to the whole country – enabling innovation, helping to reduce travel, opening up opportunities and addressing isolation and remoteness.

Our plan to provide access to superfast broadband to every home and business in Scotland is the most ambitious of any government in the UK.

We will award the contracts to deliver the R100 programme by the end of the year and begin deployment as soon as possible thereafter. We will continue to press the UK Government to ensure that Scotland does not lose out on its share of funding for UK digital connectivity activity.

5G can help to take our digital connectivity to the next level, and could add £17 billion to our economy by 2034 and create 160,000 new jobs. Our 5G strategy will help to forge our digital future and make sure that we are ready to capitalise on this emergent technology.

In the coming year, we will establish the Scotland 5G Centre, to drive forward the strategy and create a Scotland-wide approach to 5G Rural First, building on the success of the Orkney project. The public sector has a key role to play in enabling 4G, 5G and other telecoms. We will develop rental guidance for public sector land and buildings to site infrastructure, focusing first on those owned by the Scottish Government. We will pilot a sustainable 5G transport corridor along an existing trunk road.

The involvement of commercial operators is also vital.

We will host a roundtable with mobile and digital providers and businesses to secure their commitment to delivery of the 5G strategy and maximise full fibre coverage throughout Scotland. We will continue to support them to invest here, particularly through the 10-year rates relief on new fibre infrastructure. We will launch a Full Fibre Charter for Scotland for mobile and digital providers benefiting from these measures to help us deliver inclusive growth and a fairer Scotland.

Last year, we awarded a contract for the delivery of new masts to boost the coverage of 4G in remote areas – work has begun to secure agreement with mobile operators to deliver the 45 new mast sites currently in the programme by 2022, supported by a £25 million investment.

Digital public services

As government, we need to have digital capability fit for the future.

Giving everyone a way to identify themselves online, in a secure way where their privacy and personal data is protected, will help to make sure our public services are easy to access from anywhere in the country.

We have completed nearly two years of research to understand how digital identity can improve our public services, explore the barriers people may face using it and conducted a successful proof of concept to test our technological choices. This year we will develop an early version to support Social Security Scotland benefits from 2020 as work continues on a full solution.

Digital skills

An inclusive digital nation will be one that embraces change and ensures that everybody can participate in the opportunities this brings.

This year, we launched our £1 million Digital Start Fund to help more people – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds and women returning to work – access the training they need to improve their digital skills and embark on a new career.

We have invested over £3.5 million in the Digital Growth Fund and Digital Boost programme, which are helping Scottish businesses invest in new technologies such as cyber security, data analytics, software engineering and providing improved staff training and skills.

With partners, we will develop a programme to help rural businesses access all the digital support currently available to enable them to upskill and expand.

Data-driven innovation

Scotland is data-rich and our public sector holds an immense amount of information which can be transformed for social and economic good.

Making data-driven innovation work for everyone is a key aim of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal signed last year, as it works to create the Data Capital of Europe. It is working to bring learning materials to every school in the region, working with housing associations to tackle fuel poverty by targeting help to those in greatest need and supporting entrepreneurs with the commercial and technical know-how to enable their businesses to take off.

Our ongoing investment in the Data for Children Collaborative with UNICEF is shedding new light on how to improve children's wellbeing locally, nationally and globally. One of its first projects will be tackling childhood obesity, with further projects exploring how to effectively plan and deliver child services and looking closely at the complex causes of poverty to determine how best to intervene and improve outcomes for children. We expect the results of its first phase of research to be made available early next year.

We are developing new sources of environmental data to enable us to meet our ambition to be a world leader on tackling climate change, making the most up-to-date environmental data on Scotland's natural and built environment available openly to support our businesses, public sector and communities.

The second phase of our Data Science Accelerator programme launches this month, open to a wider group of public sector bodies than ever before, and we will shortly issue a call for artificial intelligence projects to help us tackle complex issues, such as climate change, awarding grants of up to £100,000 to foster new ideas and develop practical solutions.

Supporting businesses to adopt digital technology is key to boosting productivity, unlocking wage growth for workers.

Harnessing the support of partners in the public and private sectors, we will look to develop new ways to help businesses transition to highly-digitalised, low carbon business models. This work will target high employment, low productivity sectors, piloting new approaches to support companies to embed digital technologies that help them to grow, deliver greater economic impact and provide more and better employment opportunities. A key part of this testing will be to ensure that the transition can benefit everyone, providing opportunities for people to reskill and upskill and access higher quality jobs.

Fintech

Fintech brings together Scotland's historic strengths in finance and the exciting new world of digital technology. We will Support FinTech Scotland in its role in developing Scotland's fintech sector, working with partners in industry and academia to drive collaboration across Scotland.

To ensure that Scotland's ecosystem supports future innovation in fintech, we will examine the treatment of crypto assets and related technologies in Scottish legislation.

Cyber resilience

The importance of cyber resilience has never been greater. Digital technologies bring enormous opportunities – but they also bring with them new threats and vulnerabilities that we must take decisive action to manage and address.

We are investing over £1 million to drive growth in the cyber security industry, working with ScotlandIS in their role as a cluster management organisation to formalise and develop Scotland's cyber cluster. This year, we will fund an innovation challenge alongside CENSIS to examine cyber resilience in the Internet of Things.

We are continuing to support the public sector, businesses and the third sector to build their cyber defences, aided by £500,000 investment in a Cyber Essentials voucher scheme for small businesses and charities. The significant majority of public bodies in Scotland now have in place Cyber Essentials or Cyber Essentials Plus certification for their core networks and we will refresh our Public Sector Action Plan on Cyber Resilience this year to build on progress.

We will continue work to improve access to key resources and advice and host a second Cyber Scotland Week in February 2020.

Demand for cyber skills in Scotland is high and rising. This year will see the consolidation of a coherent framework of qualifications in cyber security in schools, colleges and universities. We will support the roll out of Young Scot's Digiknow? initiative — a cyber-resilience engagement programme for young people who live in disadvantaged areas or who are at risk of offending.

We will also set up a programme of industry and school/college partnerships to raise awareness and inspire students to study cyber security and consider a career in this area. Working with universities, we have helped to fund pilots aiming to promote inclusive cyber skills growth and, over the coming year, we will make available supported training for neurodivergent people to get into cyber security.

Digital and data ethics

Advances in digital technologies and the use of data and artificial intelligence (AI) are happening at pace, presenting economic and social opportunities.

However, we also recognise the challenges and concerns which must be addressed if we are all to benefit from these opportunities. In the coming year, we will develop principles and frameworks setting out how we will become an ethical digital nation. These will be clear statements of how Scotland will use digital, data and artificial intelligence to improve public services, boost productivity and drive inclusive growth in ways which protect privacy, enhance security and promote accessibility, inclusion and diversity.

We will develop an AI strategy which will help to ensure that Scotland maximises the potential economic and social benefits of AI and sends a strong signal to the world about our ambition. Our new Research Data Scotland service will launch in spring next year. It will provide support for researchers to access and use data about people, places and businesses in a secure setting for public benefit and help to attract investment to Scotland.

These actions will create the conditions which enable industry and public services to innovate with confidence, encourage inward investment to Scotland and give our people the reassurance that technological advancement will benefit Scotland socially and economically through the principled and ethical exploitation of digital technologies.

Protecting consumers

Consumers are a vital part of our economy, accounting for around 60% of spending.

The choices consumers make can help us tackle some of our most difficult challenges, such as responding to the global climate emergency, improving public health outcomes and encouraging businesses to prioritise Fair Work.

But there is evidence that consumers have low trust in some of our most essential services, such as finance, telecoms and energy. Vulnerable consumers – those on low incomes or people with disabilities – are more likely to suffer harm as a consumer and pay relatively more for goods and services, making inequality worse.

To address this, we have introduced the Consumer Scotland Bill. It will establish Consumer Scotland as a new advocacy and advice body by 2021.

Consumer Scotland will work to:

- reduce consumer harm in Scotland
- increase Scottish consumers' confidence in dealing with businesses that supply goods and services to them
- increase the extent to which consumer matters are taken into account by Scottish public authorities

As well as setting up this new body, we have taken other action to improve consumer fairness. We replaced the UK-wide consumer helpline with a Scottish service. This is now a free service and allows more bespoke support to be provided to those who need it. In the coming year we will:

- launch an awareness campaign to make it easier for consumers to find qualified electricians and publish a consultation on the regulation of electricians
- publish a scams prevention strategy to protect our most vulnerable people
- continue our work to tackle unfair delivery charges. The harm caused by these are felt most by our rural, island and remote communities and we will take action by launching the Scottish Parcel Delivery Map. We will introduce a new postcode tool to reduce the instances of unfair delivery charges resulting from postcode misclassification
- continue our work on the Energy Consumers Action Plan to protect consumers from excessive or avoidable costs, prevent new forms of social exclusion and promote the benefits of smarter domestic energy systems

Tourism

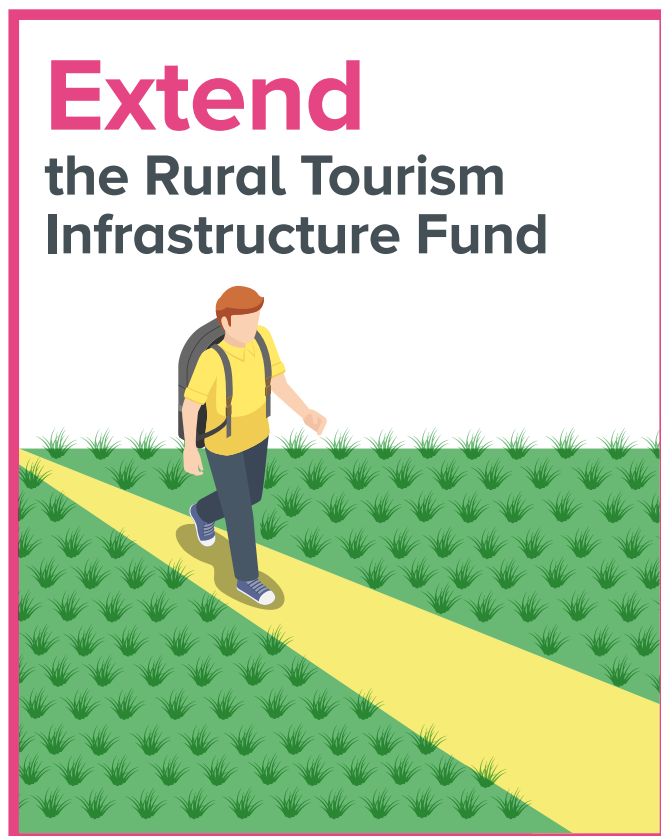
Scotland's tourism industry is an important contributor to the Scottish economy, employing over 200,000 people. There were 15.3 million overnight visits to Scotland in 2018, including over 3.5 million international visitors, showing that the rest of the world wants to experience our unique culture, beautiful natural environment and world-renowned hospitality.

However, in these uncertain times, we know that we cannot take this important industry for granted. We have asked the sector to tell us exactly what its challenges are and we are listening carefully to what they have to say. We are now working with our industry partners to co-design solutions.

We will provide a package of support for the tourism sector to:

- minimise the burden of regulation and associated cost
- recognise the essential role of marketing Scotland at UK and international levels
- provide sustainable support to enable industry to deliver high quality, value-for-money and memorable experiences
- support the growth of a skilled, professional and inclusive tourism workforce
- continue investment in Scotland's digital infrastructure to accelerate growth
- consider how we ensure that transport policies, practice, taxation and the industry's tourism strategy work best together for the benefit of the Scottish economy

In the coming months, the new Tourism Strategy for Scotland will be launched, developed in partnership with the sector, followed by an action plan in spring next year. These will help to ensure that our tourism industry drives inclusive economic growth, enhances the wellbeing of those who work in it, benefits communities and strengthens our international reputation. It will also set out the actions we will take to continue to support the tourism industry.



We must make sure that tourism respects the environmental, social and economic foundations of tourism destinations, contributes to local communities and builds a resilient industry that is fit for the future. We will make sure that the benefits tourism brings reach all parts of the country, particularly those areas that depend on the jobs and income that it creates.

We have established an agri-tourism monitor farm programme to help farms, estates and crofts use food tourism as a sustainable contribution to their businesses. The first four agri-tourism projects started this year in Shetland, Uist, East Lothian and West Dunbartonshire.

We will build on the £500,000 marketing campaign that highlighted the hidden gems of the south of Scotland, continuing our investment again this year. The campaign will focus on promoting the area's fantastic mountain biking facilities, underpinned by our additional investment at Glentress to improve visitors' experiences.

We will invest a further £1 million in forest tourism in the south of Scotland by 2021, supporting our work to establish Scotland as an adventure tourism destination and to encourage sustainable tourism.

Given the unique circumstances and critical impact on tourism in Lossiemouth of the loss of the town's East Beach Footbridge, and to celebrate next year being the Year of Coasts and Waters, the Scottish Government will fund its replacement, restoring the only safe access to the beautiful sands, protecting jobs and businesses in the town into the bargain.

In 2017, we announced a two-year £6 million package of funding through the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to enhance the experience of visitors to our iconic rural and island tourist sites. Since its launch, the funding has been used to help the tourism industry keep pace with the growing number of visitors these sites attract by developing and maintaining key infrastructure and facilities, as well as helping to protect the natural environment.

Due to the success of the Fund, we will make another £3 million available to invest in new projects in 2020-21.

We will use technology to improve visitors' experience of Scotland's tourist sites by:

- creating a free open public Wi-Fi system at 10 sites on the North Coast 500 Route. It will add to the existing Highland Council Wi-Fi project, providing tourists and residents with increased internet connectivity all year round
- launching a Scottish UNESCO digital trail, providing an online experience featuring all of Scotland's UNESCO sites

People are vital to the success of our tourism industry and ensuring workers are protected and treated fairly is essential. We have been working to encourage more Fair Work practices across the sector and increase the number of businesses paying the real Living Wage. An additional 50 hospitality businesses were accredited this year as real Living Wage employers.

But there is more to do. This year, we will work with the Poverty Alliance to further increase the number of Living Wage employers and work with the Scottish Trades Union Congress to make sure that workers' voices are heard. We will also invest in a campaign to promote tourism as a career of choice, to help address skills challenges across the sector.



The Transient Visitor Levy Bill will create a discretionary power for local authorities to apply a levy on overnight visitor stays



2020: Year of Coasts and Waters

2020 will be designated as the Year of Coasts and Waters, which will promote opportunities to experience and enjoy Scotland's beautiful coastal landscape and waters.

The Waverley Paddle Steamer is currently out-of-service and urgently requires new boilers in order to sail again. As part of the Year of Coasts and Waters, we will work with partners to support the repairs, helping to make sure that locals and visitors are able to enjoy the journeys the Waverley makes to over 60 ports and piers in the UK.

We will make £50,000 available for one-off grants for community groups, charities and social enterprises to hold themed events, co-designed with young people.

We will provide an additional £400,000 this year for North Ayrshire's Coig project. This will result in a total investment of £700,000 since 2018 for routes giving visitors the chance to enjoy the area's islands, coastal landscapes, harbours and beaches.

To further encourage visitors to more of Scotland's inhabited islands, we will launch the new Islands Passport early in 2020.

Scotland in the global economy

Exports are a key driver of Scotland's economic growth, driving business innovation and productivity, creating jobs and helping to raise living standards as well as generating tax receipts to support essential public services.

In 2018-19, export of goods increased by 12.9%, faster than the other UK nations and the UK as a whole. We want our performance to be even better over the next year, increasing the value of Scottish exports and increasing the number of businesses in Scotland that export. This will ensure that our export base is diversified and more resilient.

Our enhanced export plan, *A Trading Nation*, has been published and is backed by £20 million of investment over three years. It sets out plans to grow Scotland's exports to add around £3.5 billion to Scottish GDP and create 17,500 more jobs. We have developed new data tools to improve our export intelligence and support the exporting community to grow.

This year, we will:

- recruit 15 new in-market specialists for priority markets, to help Scotland's exporters take advantage of new overseas potential. These will be in place by August 2020
- build on our partnership with the Scottish Chambers of Commerce to run more international trade missions, supported by up to £2 million
- begin work to expand our Trade Envoy network from four to 12
- backed by £1.5 million, develop a new digital portal which supports exporters, as well as providing them with mentoring and skills development
- support trade activities around the Dubai Expo, Rugby World Cup and the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo shows in China
- continue the roll out of the First Minister's Export Challenge, where experienced exporters mentor new exporters, supported by £2 million over three years

- begin work to revamp the GlobalScot network with a new digital platform and promotional material, which will see it expand from 600 members to over 2,000
- launch a campaign of awareness raising to make sure that Scottish companies know about, and can access, export finance support

This year, we will expand this evidence-based approach to drive stronger performance in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). By summer 2020, we will put in place an FDI Growth Plan for Scotland. It will set out how we will target FDI attraction to grow the sectors where Scotland is currently world-class as well as building on emerging expertise and enabling technology to address major global challenges around ageing, climate change and wellbeing.

This approach will integrate Scotland's vision of an economy that supports wellbeing and equality into how we promote ourselves abroad and direct the opportunities we seek to attract to Scotland.

We will:

- target investment attraction in markets and sectors where we have a comparative or emerging advantage, such as energy, personalised healthcare and data science, focusing on the best market opportunities for Scotland
- attract start-ups specialising in technology and low carbon to relocate to Scotland, helping to build an entrepreneurial culture around Scotland's future strengths
- attract investors for the long term, creating a buddy system for incoming investors to help them to increase their business opportunities in Scotland and embed them into supply chains
- identify and promote strategic place-making sites and assets to targeted investors who will use and benefit from those assets, for example on former industrial and energy sites
- support the effort to attract green investment in capital and infrastructure projects by attracting the companies that can provide the skills and technology to deliver those projects

- increase the skills match and support for those sectors and companies which make Scotland globally competitive

Focusing on our best opportunities in attracting inward investment that supports our economic vision will also support further growth in exports by strengthening supply chains in many of the same sectors that provide our biggest trading opportunities.

A diverse, skilled and empowered workforce

We understand that certain sectors are going through periods of rapid change, which is why it is important that we ensure that our skills system continues to match the needs of industry, workers and learners now and in the future.

Our Future Skills Action Plan sets out our vision and ambition to help workers and businesses strengthen existing skills and help people to transfer their skills and experience more easily between workplaces and sectors. It includes a commitment to increase our investment in workforce development by a further £10 million per year from 2020-21, adding to the current £10 million Flexible Workforce Development Fund.

In partnership with Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council, we will make sure that our skills system is world class and that it becomes increasingly agile, responsive and flexible. We will ensure more opportunities to upskill and retrain and that the specific barriers faced by particular groups, such as women, older people and minority ethnic people, are addressed.

This reorientation of the skills system will put Scotland in a strong position to respond to global challenges and opportunities such as changes in our demography, the impact of technological change, higher levels of international uncertainty and the global climate emergency.



We will:

- through the Scottish National Retraining Partnership, work with the Confederation of British Industry and the Scottish Trade Union Congress to identify opportunities to enhance access to upskilling and reskilling opportunities
- work with employers to develop and introduce new, innovative funding mechanisms to support learners and workers at every stage of their career
- make sure that there are greater opportunities for adult learning, in-work training and re-training so that everyone can benefit from fulfilling and fair work
- build employer confidence in the skills system, with clear opportunities for them to influence it and contribute to what it provides
- expand the range of Graduate Apprenticeships available in critical areas such as civil engineering, digital, cyber security and data science, while also continuing to encourage women to apply. As part of this, we will engage with business on how the Scottish Government's response to the Apprenticeship Levy can continue to address the needs of businesses
- increase investment in workforce development and explore flexible incentives for all relevant stakeholders, including colleges, universities and training providers, to develop new approaches to upskilling and lifelong learning. This will include, for example, more flexible and online delivery models and developing 'micro-credentials' that can be stand-alone skills driven modules or part of a postgraduate qualification

Over the next year, we will work with stakeholders across our education and skills system and those who engage with it to design and develop specific proposals to turn our vision into a reality.

Recognising the particular challenges faced in our rural communities, this year we launched the Skills Action Plan for Rural Scotland to address skills shortages, help attract and retain talent and manage the demographic challenges faced by rural areas.

Apprenticeships

The number of people benefiting from work-based learning has risen for the eighth year in a row. In 2018-19, over 37,000 apprentices were in training, including Graduate Apprenticeships which offer an alternative route for people to develop the higher level skills that our economy needs. We are progressing towards a record number of 30,000 new apprenticeship starts in 2020-21.

To support our work to double entitlement to early learning and childcare to 1,140 hours a year, we have increased the number of childcare-related apprenticeships from 1,691 in 2017-18 to 2,102 last year. We will continue to increase the number of childcare-related Modern and Foundation Apprenticeships, in line with demand, and pilot a Graduate Apprenticeship for the sector.

To help to secure the future forestry workforce, we have put in place a new Forest Machine Operators Modern Apprenticeship scheme. The first apprentices are starting this year and helping the sector to harvest more sustainable timber and contribute to carbon storage efforts.

No one left behind

In December 2018, we published *No One Left Behind*, a review of employability services which set out our intention to create an employability system that is more flexible, joined-up and responsive to the needs of people using services.

Our work so far through programmes like the Employability Fund and Community Jobs Scotland have made an important contribution, but labour market challenges remain for many equality groups and it is right that our system continues to evolve.

This reform will take time to deliver. We will work closely with local authorities and a range of partners, including Skills Development Scotland, the third sector and private training providers, to plan and deliver services that are shaped by those that use them and the people that deliver them.

This transition is being managed carefully to make sure that the sector stays stable and that support remains available to those who need it. We will continue to support the Employability Fund and Community Jobs Scotland, while making preparations for these and other existing sources of support form part of the new employability system. We will also continue to support young people who are struggling to engage in education or find work through Inspiring Scotland's new Our Future Now Fund and through Discovering Your Potential, which provides flexible and intensive support for young care leavers.

These wider ambitions will build on the early success of our new, devolved employment support service, Fair Start Scotland.

Backed by £96 million, it helps those who face the greatest barriers towards and into work – free from the risk of sanctions on their benefits. It is already making an impact: in the first year of the programme, over 2,000 people have started jobs.

Careers advice

Good careers advice is essential to help people at any age find the right job. We will publish a new Careers Information Advice and Guidance Strategy later this year to make sure that our careers services are flexible and accessible to the needs of Scotland's workforce, as well as helping people be responsive to changes in the labour market and economy.

Supporting more disabled people into work

Last winter, we published *A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan* which set out how we intend to reduce the disability employment gap by at least half by 2038. The plan focuses on working with employers, helping disabled people into sustained work and supporting young people. In the coming year, we will:

- invest up to £1 million in a new Public Social Partnership to address the barriers that employers face in recruiting and retaining disabled people
- run a campaign to promote the positive case for employing a diverse workforce
- invest up to £500,000 to help disabled people undertake work experience
- ensure disabled people have access to information and guidance about their statutory employment rights and how to take action if those are denied
- improve approaches to supported employment
- evaluate the employment support we provide to those who suffer mental ill-health and make improvements to Fair Start Scotland

As well as supporting disabled people in the workplace, we remain committed to ensuring equality for disabled people across society and we will continue to ensure their voices are heard to make sure we better understand what work we need to do.

Fair Work first

We want Scotland to be a world-leading Fair Work nation by 2025, which is why in February this year we published the *Fair Work Action Plan*.

For workers, Fair Work means increased flexibility to manage family and caring responsibility, greater financial security, better physical health and improved wellbeing. For employers and businesses, it can reduce staff turnover, help with recruitment and drive productivity and innovation.

We are asking employers to work with us to put Fair Work at the core of inclusive economic growth.

Support through Regional Selective Assistance and other large grants is now conditional on employers paying the real Living Wage, not using exploitative zero-hour contracts and taking actions to address the gender pay gap.

Over 80% of all workers in Scotland now earn at least the real Living Wage and we have proportionately more than five times as many accredited real Living Wage employers in Scotland than in the rest of the UK. In addition, we are continuing to provide funding for councils to commission care services that pay adult social care workers the real Living Wage.

In August, we launched an extended Workplace Equality Fund. This £800,000 Fund will support employers to address long-standing barriers faced by disadvantaged groups in the labour market and enable businesses with innovative ideas to embed Fair Work within their workplaces.

Our work with businesses is paying off – over 650 businesses in Scotland have signed up to the voluntary Scottish Business Pledge, resulting in practices across our workplaces that are good for businesses and good for Scotland, as well as contributing to our efforts to meet the *UN Sustainable Development Goals* and realise the outcomes in Scotland's *National Performance Framework*.

However, we know that we need to go further.

This year, we are:

- launching the refreshed Scottish Business Pledge, aligning it more closely with our Fair Work principles and including environmental impact for the first time
- launching a new online Fair Work service for small and micro employers so that they can access more easily the support and guidance that they need to help them to adopt Fair Work practices
- making funding available so that the real Living Wage can be paid to all workers, the majority of whom are women, delivering funded early learning and childcare hours from August 2020
- providing a further £380,000 to the Poverty Alliance to continue their work with employers across the country to make sure more people in Scotland are paid the real Living Wage
- continuing to fund the Fair Work and Trade Union Modernisation Fund to support trade unions to embed Fair Work in workplaces
- working with the Scottish Trade Union Congress to increase the number of workers covered by collective bargaining

All of us benefit when everyone can participate equally in our economy. We are taking specific action through our Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, Disability Employment Action Plan and the Race Equality Action Plan.

The gender pay gap for full-time employees in Scotland is the lowest on record and lower than the UK as a whole. Earlier this year, we published our *Gender Pay Gap Action Plan* – a first in the UK. It will tackle the causes of workplace inequality, particularly focusing on disabled women, minority ethnic women, older women, women from poorer socio-economic backgrounds and women with caring responsibilities.

Key actions we are taking include:

- investing up to £5 million over three years to help up to 2,000 women to return to work after a career break, particularly in sectors where women are under-represented
- refreshing the gender and diversity element of the Scottish Business Pledge to encourage action to address the gender pay gap
- continuing to fund Close the Gap to challenge and change employment practices and workplace cultures
- continuing to fund Family Friendly Working Scotland to promote flexible workplaces to employers

We recognise that progress in improving the minority ethnic employment and pay gaps has been too slow and it is time to be much more proactive. We have committed to build on the work we have done so far and we will:

- demonstrate renewed public sector leadership on race equality in relation to recruitment and supporting the development of talented people in our workforce
- review what more our devolved employment service – Fair Start Scotland – can do to support more people from minority ethnic communities into work
- consider options for rolling out the Recognition of Prior Learning pilot to other parts of Scotland

Population and migration

Migration to Scotland is vital to our economic, demographic and cultural needs and attracting people with the skills that our employers need has never been more important.

Our position is clear: we welcome EU citizens, we value them and we want them to stay. In the past year, we have successfully worked with other organisations to lobby the UK Government to drop its plans to charge EU citizens a fee to retain rights they already had.

Our advice and support service for EU citizens is now being delivered by Citizen's Advice Scotland and numbers using the service continue to increase. We launched the 'Stay in Scotland' campaign this spring and, over the coming year, we will build on it and also invest £250,000 in community-based support across the country.

Scotland faces a population challenge. While our population grew in the last year, 14 of our local authorities experienced depopulation and projections are that all of our population growth over the next 25 years will be driven by migration. We need to grow our population to make sure we can support sustainable, vibrant and resilient communities and drive inclusive growth.

We continue to argue for powers over migration for Scotland to be devolved to the Scottish Parliament, reflecting that our needs are different from that of the UK as a whole. Current UK Government immigration policy does not meet Scotland's needs and the proposals in the recent Immigration White Paper will be harmful to us.

We have established a new Ministerial Task Force to address our population concerns by intensifying good work where it is already happening and harnessing more opportunities for change.



Following extensive consultation with employers and stakeholders, we will publish a further paper on Scotland's unique population needs and a tailored migration policy later this year.

Addressing skills gaps – a Scottish approach

We will develop a distinct Scottish approach to attracting and retaining talent to address skills gaps in our workforce and we will take action to prepare our labour market to respond to the global climate emergency. We will:

- attract people and families from the rest of the UK to relocate to Scotland by supporting local authorities to develop plans to address skills gaps
- work with partners, including businesses, to highlight the benefits of working and living in Scotland
- work with universities, colleges and local authorities to encourage people to stay in Scotland and to move within Scotland to address regional skills gaps
- make it easier for working families, women, carers and older people to remain in or return to work
- provide a new web-based 'Working in Scotland' advice service for people relocating to Scotland for work, giving advice on current recruitment campaigns, skills and training opportunities. It will include information on skills gaps and shortages, including in areas we will need to tackle the global climate emergency

Scotland's regions and towns

Our £1.8 billion commitment to City Region Deals, Regional Growth Deals and associated investments is delivering on infrastructure, skills and innovation right across Scotland, with almost £300 million of spend on this programme already and up to £1.5 billion to be invested over the next 15 years.

Thanks to persistent calls from the Scottish Government, the UK Government has committed to achieving 100% coverage of Scotland with a Growth Deal. This means that, as well as existing Deals, communities in Argyll and Bute, Falkirk, Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles will benefit from fresh investment from both governments to stimulate inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

We will continue to support the strategic Regional Economic Partnerships developing from City Region and Growth Deals, using Deal investment as a catalyst to drive their long-term inclusive growth plans. We will work with, and provide support to, local authorities and other Deal partners to ensure this investment supports our climate change ambition – and we will encourage the UK Government, which matches our Deal funding, to do likewise.

We want our towns and town centres to be vibrant, creative, enterprising and accessible – to make them places where people meet, socialise and do business.

Three new Business Improvement Districts have been created in the past year in Nairn, Selkirk and Lanark, resulting in a total of 37 across the country. We have funded and launched the first Digital Improvement District in Cupar, which is piloting a model of delivering digital infrastructure and WiFi for Scotland's towns.

We have partnered with COSLA to make available a £50 million Town Centre Fund which will stimulate and support a wide range of investments in local buildings, access and infrastructure, encouraging town centres to diversify and flourish.



Strengthening our rural and island economies and communities

Traditional rural sectors like farming, food production and forestry are essential to our success. Scotland's rural and island assets also provide natural and business resources for other key economic sectors, especially food and drink, but also energy, tourism, creative industries and life sciences. We must also work to improve the wellbeing of our rural, coastal and island communities and provide a positive future for them.

Achieving our climate change ambitions will involve harnessing the power and capital of all our natural assets. This is a challenge but also an opportunity to help people stay on the land, and create sustainable, productive businesses and communities in even our most remote and isolated rural areas. Our land and our rural population are key allies in the fight to tackle climate change.

We know that more young people want to stay, and now consider staying, in the areas they grew up, but we need to do more to stem rural depopulation and to attract more people to live and work in rural and island communities.

We will develop an action plan to support repopulation of our rural and island communities and work with partners to test approaches using small scale pilots in rural Scotland. Our 'Stay in Scotland' campaign will work with rural businesses and industries to promote it to employees and we will showcase Scotland as a desirable place to work and live to recruitment agencies at home and overseas.

The soft fruit and seasonal vegetable sector is important to Scotland's rural economy and we understand the reliance it has on migrant labour provision. We will work with this sector during the course of the next year to better understand the challenge it faces in the medium to longer term and how best to support businesses to meet their workforce needs.



As part of our work on the fourth National Planning Framework, we will explore new, proactive policy options for planning to enable development that supports dynamic rural economies and helps to sustain and support rural communities in the future. We will also review permitted development to examine what additional measures can be introduced to further support the delivery of affordable homes in rural areas.

To do that, we will build on recent research to develop a better understanding of the challenges and lived experiences of people across rural Scotland and the impact of changes in our economy on key rural sectors. In this Parliament, we will explore how the rural and island housing fund might be adapted in the future to expand the range of options to support housing development in remote and island communities.

We will review the services on the West Highland rail corridor to find opportunities to integrate rail services with other transport modes as well as active travel. These will boost the local and regional economy, help to develop sustainable tourism and improve connectivity for local communities and the Islands. In addition, we will identify opportunities across the rural rail network in the south west of the country, drawing on the successful approach adopted in the recent study of the line north of Inverness, to exploit the value of those lines for the benefit of local communities and the wider economy.

The third Rural Parliament was held in Stranraer in November last year, with over 370 people from rural communities across Scotland gathering to discuss the issues which are important to them and to put forward potential solutions. We will work with Scottish Rural Action and others to support the development of a rural movement that will engage with communities between rural parliaments to include a more diverse range of voices, including those in disadvantaged communities.



Work is underway to establish the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency by April next year. It will be the first ever enterprise agency to embed Fair Work at the core of its operations and a key priority will be to identify action to address gender pay inequality and low pay in the region. We will invest £13.3 million this year to set up the organisation and to support a number of crucial projects across the area, including work to address skills shortages and support regeneration.

To further drive collaboration in inclusive and sustainable development, we will establish the Convention of the South of Scotland. It will bring together public bodies with responsibility for growth and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on priorities and how to tackle key regional issues.

This year, we have consulted with island communities to inform the development of the first ever National Islands Plan. We will publish it by the end of the year. It will set out how we and other public sector partners will work to improve outcomes for island economies and communities and, once it is published, we will report on our progress each year. We will also create a Young Islanders Network for young people from all Scottish islands to ensure their interests and priorities are reflected in our work.

Maximising the value and sustainability of our land and marine assets

Scotland's land and marine assets are at the heart of thriving rural and island economies.

The marine economy

The marine economy supports high quality jobs in some of our most remote communities, boosts our exports and plays an important role in our efforts to tackle climate change.

Our natural marine assets and our expertise in the sector help to support our work to develop and deploy offshore wind, wave and tidal energy technologies and to explore the potential of carbon capture, usage and storage.

We have consulted this year on our Scottish Maritime strategy. It will be launched later this autumn and will set out how the marine economy supports our economic ambitions and helps to sustain communities, as well as identifying areas where we can take further action to make it a world-class industry.

Fisheries and aquaculture

We have held extensive discussions with a wide range of stakeholders on our proposals for the future of fisheries management. We are now developing that framework and will consult further on firm proposals which will help to protect our environment, support and grow local businesses and protect and strengthen the interests of rural communities.

We have invested £2 million to carry out emergency work at fishing harbours to keep them operational, securing vital jobs in coastal communities. We have worked with Fisheries Local Action Groups to support traditional fishing activity and help the industry to diversify and communities to thrive and boost incomes. We will invest an additional £1 million in these activities this year.

We have invested £1.5 million to modernise the management of inshore fisheries, including supporting the Scottish Inshore Fisheries Integrated Database programme being led by the University of St Andrews.

In the coming year, we will commence work to modernise the Scottish inshore fisheries fleet, investing a further £1.5 million in inshore technologies such as the deployment of remote electronic monitoring for scallop fishing vessels. This year, we will continue our work to introduce vessel tracking systems across the inshore fleet and, to enable sustainable growth of Scotland's shellfish growing sector, we will set up a shellfish working group with members from both the private and public sectors.



Aquaculture supports the sustainable growth of Scotland's most important food sector, farmed salmon. The aquaculture sector brings new products, facilities and equipment which can be applied to our industry and exported internationally, creating significant economic benefit, often in remote rural areas. We will continue to support Scotland's Aquaculture Innovation Centre to drive investment in innovation and research and development in new technologies and equipment.

Last year, we published a 10-year Farmed Fish Health Framework to address the health and wellbeing of farmed fish, promote innovation in fish health management and reduce fish farm mortality. We have introduced tighter thresholds for sea lice reporting and intervention and, in 2020, will introduce legislation requiring all marine farms to report a weekly sea lice number. We will also provide improved spatial planning advice on fish farming developments to support local authorities to make sound decisions.

We will continue to work with partners to promote the aquaculture sector as an attractive career choice, including supporting the development of the Women in Scottish Aquaculture Initiative to encourage women to take up careers in the sector and remove barriers to their participation.

Farming and food production

Farmers and agriculture businesses in Scotland are at the heart of our rural communities. They manage and protect our countryside, produce high quality food and are a key part of any solution to climate change.

We will deliver agricultural support payment entitlements through the Common Agricultural Policy as it will apply in Scotland should the UK leave the EU, and will maintain the CAP over a period of stability until around 2024. We will continue to press for Scotland to get a fair allocation of funds for farming and food production in the future. We will resist any attempts by the UK Government to apply any conditions or rules on how any monies repatriated from the £160 million due to Scotland should be spent.

Leaving the EU without a deal is likely to have significant adverse impacts on all of Scotland's rural economy but especially on farming and food production. We will continue to work with stakeholders to explore all possible options to mitigate those impacts where we can.

Even though the sector is under unprecedented stress, we must continue to encourage more people into farming. To future-proof the industry, we will release more public sector land in Scotland for new entrants. Since 2016, more than 6,400 hectares of land have been released to help 61 new entrants take their first step onto the farming ladder. Investment of around £24 million has helped 250 new agricultural businesses to launch and supported hundreds of development projects.



The Rural Support Bill will enable the amendment of retained EU law relating to the EU Common Agricultural Policy

In the coming year, we will analyse how our starter farms are growing as businesses. Farms which participate will be provided with detailed specialist advice for their business to help inform future plans.

We will support the establishment of a land matching service to link potential new entrants with current farmers and crofters who wish to retire.

This year, we will seek further opportunities to make land available and will roll out the Ringlink apprenticeship project to new locations, helping to develop a stronger pathway into apprenticeships in farming.

We want more women in agriculture to have opportunities to develop their skills and talents. As well as supporting our Fair Work agenda, ensuring the sector is accessible to women will help to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of Scotland's rural economy. Our Women in Agriculture Taskforce will publish its report in the autumn, identifying next steps. We have already committed to fund and support delivery and expansion of the three women-only pilot training programmes. And we will appoint a dedicated co-ordinator to take forward work in this area.

We established a taskforce to help prioritise our proposals to provide stability and simplify Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) measures between 2021 and 2024. We will publish the taskforce's report this autumn and develop substantive measures ready for implementation in 2021, including the level at which the largest direct payments made to individual recipients will be capped in order to redistribute the funds elsewhere within the CAP support. That includes introducing the Rural Support Bill to Parliament this year which will allow Scotland to amend EU retained law.

We have set up a group to advise on future policy for farming and food production. Its work is underway and will be enhanced by advice from the recently-appointed panel of academic advisors. It will provide update reports on its considerations to Scottish Ministers every six months to allow more detailed work and activity to be commissioned where appropriate.



Crofting

Crofting is part of Scotland's cultural heritage and helps to enhance our landscapes and habitats. It contributes to the local economies of remoter rural and island areas and, crucially, helps to sustain people on the land. We want to ensure that crofting continues long into the 21st century and beyond.

We will publish the Crofting National Development Plan to set the long-term strategic direction for crofting and continue to support new entrants to crofting, including for woodland crofts. We will also work with the Crofting Commission and Highlands and Islands Enterprise to enhance the sustainability of crofting communities.

The Crofting Commission will take forward key development priorities such as improving croft occupancy levels, supporting township development and creating opportunities for new entrants.

Animal and plant health and welfare

We are continuing our work to protect the welfare of animals in Scotland. We are now recruiting members to our interim Scottish Animal Welfare Commission, which will provide advice on the welfare of sentient animals.

We have published new *Farm Animal Welfare Guidance* for the keeping of chickens, improving our reputation for high quality meat production. Similar work for egg-laying hens and other species of livestock will be introduced in the next year as we engage with industry and stakeholders.

We consulted on introducing compulsory video recording of slaughter in abattoirs to make sure it is carried out safely and humanely and will bring forward secondary legislation next year. We will support the industry to introduce CCTV in abattoirs before it becomes compulsory and we will explore the potential for new systems of calf rearing in the dairy sector.

We will continue to work with other administrations in the UK to educate the public and key audiences of disease risks and also to promote the importance of biosecurity to protect Scotland's livestock and wildlife.

Lucy's law

to prevent third party sale of puppies and kittens under 6 months old



We are taking forward our work to ensure a modern licensing system for dog, cat and rabbit breeders, pet sellers and animal sanctuaries and rehoming services, taking the most robust approach in the UK. We intend to use the new licensing system to prevent the sale of puppies and kittens under six months old in the course of business by anyone other than the breeder – known as 'Lucy's Law'.

We will bring forward new legislation to Parliament regarding a range of animal welfare measures including increases to the maximum available penalties for the most serious animal welfare offences. We will also launch a media campaign on puppy farming to improve the wellbeing of animals.

We will begin a review of animal health legislation for livestock to ensure it remains fit for purpose. We will provide funding for Livestock Health Scotland to support activity to trial new animal disease controls and farm practice.

We have funded the Plant Health Centre as a dedicated virtual centre of expertise to tackle plant health challenges in Scotland. Since its launch last year, it has developed resilience and emergency response plans and advised on a range of harmful plant pests.



The Animal Health and Welfare (Amendment) Bill will increase penalties for the most serious animal welfare offences

It will continue its activity this year, including educating the public and industry about plant threats. This will include encouraging more of the nation's gardeners to buy locally-produced plants and shrubs.

A key focus will be on protecting local crop production, forestry, natural environment and the nation's gardens from the threat of new devastating pests and diseases by strengthening Scottish contingency plans. We will also update Scotland's Plant Health Strategy.

The Scottish Government will support the United Nation's International Year of Plant Health in 2020 through a programme of events and actions, with a particular focus on activities for children and young people.

We will work with land managers to reduce reliance on pesticides and adopt an integrated management approach. This activity will be supported by the Plant Health Centre and their work to quantify the impact of pesticide withdrawals.

Food and drink

Our food and drink sector is the second largest contributor to Scotland's economy, with turnover reaching a record £14.8 billion in 2018. Exports in whisky and farmed salmon, our two most significant products economically, continue to grow in 2019. To acknowledge the ongoing importance of food to our economy and society, we will establish a Ministerial working group to co-ordinate action across government.

We supported Phase 1 of Ambition 2030, the national food and drink strategy, to grow the industry. We will independently assess Phase 1 to inform development of the next phase and to identify priorities for action in the next three years.

Over the past year, we have invested £7 million in our Food Processing, Manufacturing and Cooperation grant scheme, supporting 19 projects.

Export of food and drink is particularly important to our economy, with turnover reaching a record £6.3 billion in 2018. This year, we launched Phase 2 of our Food and Drink Export Plan, backed by £4.5 million of funding of which £2.7 million comes directly from Scottish Government. This funding will help the Scottish companies take their products into new and existing markets, supported by expert advice, to build relationships with buyers and offer encouragement to develop new products. In the coming year, we will also maximise opportunities to showcase and promote Scottish food and drink internationally and to the UK market.

Scotland already produces sustainable, climate-friendly and healthy food, but there is more that we can do to reduce food miles and waste, enable innovation and ensure that more people have the opportunity to benefit from the food we produce. Through our funding of the Food for Life programme we will continue to promote and encourage more local sourcing through public sector contracts. We will also build on the good work already underway to enable more Scottish produce to be served in our schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, care settings and prisons; including organic food.

We will also:

- create a Food and Drink Academy to support around 20 businesses with high growth potential, providing targeted support and advice and offering a range of cross-sector products to fast-track growth
- launch a new food and drink ecommerce platform for Scottish suppliers to showcase and sell their products in international markets
- work with local government to develop local food and drink action plans, aligning work at a national level to local circumstances

We will continue to roll out our Regional Food Fund which has supported 78 projects over the last year. We will also enhance our Food to Go scheme to allow more small and independent food retail businesses to invest in equipment and activity that allows them to provide fresh, healthy food products, locally produced and sourced food. This also contributes to reduced food waste and improved environmental efficiency.

Our Sector Plans continue to deliver, with the Craft Beer Sector Plan launched last year and the Seafood Sector Plan launched in May this year. This year, we will launch a Beef Sector Plan and work with industry to develop a Poultry Sector Plan, with a Scottish quality mark for poultry to drive growth.

We will also launch a Dairy Sector Plan which will focus on industry proposals to drive efficiency, productivity and growth. We will support this plan with a whole sector approach to industry development. This will include examining the potential for new systems of calf rearing in dairy systems and operating a pilot project to record usage of veterinary medicines to inform whether and how to encourage more efficient usage in all livestock sectors.

We will also continue our work with the industry to strengthen the position of primary producers in the supply chain. We will consult on the option of introducing mandatory written contracts for the dairy sector and will consider measures to tackle unfair trading practices. We will share data with participants in the beef efficiency scheme and publish an interim general report outlining findings to date.



The Good Food Nation Bill will support our ambition for Scotland to be a Good Food Nation

We have worked this year to protect Scotland's food and drink Protected Geographical Indications (PGIs) and to encourage new applications. Ayrshire Earlies potatoes gained PGI status in July and new applications have been prepared for Hebridean Native Salmon, Forfar Bridies and Wild Venison. We will continue to support marketing and promotion of Scottish red meat, including Scotch Lamb PGI and Scotch Beef PGI and we will seek opportunities to showcase all our PGI producers and products to wider audiences.

We have made sure that Scotland will be able to opt-out of cultivating GM crops in the future and we will do all we can to resist this status being threatened by the terms of future UK Government trade deals.

Our landscape and climate mean Scotland has an unrivalled natural larder and we will seek to strengthen our reputation as a producer of high quality food. The provenance of Scotland's food and drink products generates a unique premium for producers which we must work collectively to protect. That means everyone playing their part to protect the environment which creates that provenance.

We will work with stakeholders to develop a Food and Drink Environmental Action Plan to strengthen the industry's contribution to tackling climate change. As a first step, we will host a sustainability summit by the end of the year to identify priorities for action. This will create impetus for businesses and producers to play their part in responding to our climate emergency and give them the opportunity to share current good practice.

Good Food Nation

We are already delivering on our ambition to become a Good Food Nation, working towards a Scotland where everyone takes pride and pleasure in, as well as benefits from, the food we produce, buy, cook, serve and eat every day. We will lay before Parliament a Good Food Nation Bill to provide a statutory framework to support this ambition.

We will publish a progress report on our work later this year as well as explore how to maximise the global impact of our brand by working with the Scotland is Now campaign.

We have created opportunities for young people to learn more about where their food comes from and the role farms play in that. Our £1 million Good Food Futures programme will give more school children from more communities the opportunity to visit and learn about farms, as well as providing an end-to-end approach to food education, including healthy cooking lessons, putting more locally-produced healthy food on school menus and encouraging young people to consider a career in the food and drink sector. We will expand the programme further and work with business, the public and the third sector to develop guidance so that more people are encouraged to eat more locally-produced, sustainable and healthy food that supports our aims to tackle climate change.

Since he was appointed, our National Chef has played a significant role in supporting government to showcase Scotland as a Good Food Nation internationally and at home. In particular, he has increased awareness of the benefits of healthy, sustainable food and the importance of using locally-sourced products to minimise food miles and reduce carbon footprints. We will work with him to develop a fresh programme of activity over the coming year.

We will continue to support the Andrew Fairlie scholarship for two young chefs, one female and male, and we will also support Scotland's chefs to take part in the World Culinary Championships.

Water

The water sector in Scotland is, according to a recent report commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, the fastest growing sector in our economy. Scottish Water, our publicly-owned utility, has recently recorded its highest ever customer satisfaction levels and is among Scotland's most trusted companies.

This year it is investing around £600 million to maintain and improve the provision of high quality drinking water and waste water management. In 2020, we will run a competition across Scotland's universities to establish a Hydro Nation Chair to help our water industry manage the challenges of climate change, including innovative approaches to surface water management and managing changes to organic matter levels in raw water. We are also reviewing our approach to Blue-Green cities and will bring forward proposals by the end of this year.

Last year, we piloted water refill points in a small number of locations across the country. Hundreds of people are topping up each day, reducing plastic waste and keeping healthy and hydrated. This year we will make more refill points available and will run events across the country to encourage people to use refillable bottles and use water wisely in their homes.

Transport

Our commitments on climate change include radical steps to decarbonise transport and put us on a path to net zero by 2045. We will publish a new National Transport strategy later this year which will redefine investment priorities to put sustainable transport at the heart of decision-making and ensure that transport plays a key role in delivering net zero emissions by 2045.

Work is underway on the second Strategic Transport Projects Review which will identify and prioritise the strategic transport interventions across all of Scotland to deliver the vision set out in the National Transport Strategy for the next 20 years. It will shape our ambitious plans for strategic transport investment that will deliver real benefits for communities and businesses all over Scotland. It will embed sustainable travel principles and review investment priorities in light of the climate change emergency.



We welcome the Glasgow Connectivity Commission report and the ambitious vision it sets out for the Glasgow City Region for creating an inclusive, thriving and liveable city. We are committed to working with partners to consider the Commission's recommendations, and as part of the second Strategic Transport Projects Review, we will consider the potential for a Glasgow Metro, which builds on the planned City Region Deal investment to link Glasgow Airport and the new National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland to Paisley Gilmour Street.

Ferries

Ferries play a crucial role in the socio-economic development of Scotland's remote and island communities. We invest over £10 million each year to make sure that inter-island ferries serve the needs of these communities.

To safeguard ferry services for the future, we have invested £3.5 million in the past year in upgrades and replacements of key systems and equipment on board ferries, making vessels less likely to break down.

We will provide an additional £4 million this year to continue this important work, as well as progress upgrades to major port infrastructure, making sure that ferries continue to be available for those who need them. We will set out the second Scottish Ferries Plan by the end of 2022. Where evidenced, we will continue to enhance both the Northern Isles and the Clyde and Hebrides ferry services in response to the challenges ahead. We will continue to work with local authorities in the Northern Isles on improving intra-island services and we will shortly confirm the outcome of the tender for Northern Isles ferry services.

The Scottish Government is committed to securing a future for the Ferguson Marine shipyard in Port Glasgow. That is why we have agreed with administrators to take the yard into public control. This is providing continued employment for the yard's skilled workforce and ensuring the completion of two ferries which will provide vital support for our island communities.

Rail

Our work on the rail network is delivering more seats, more services and faster journey times. Passengers are already benefiting from an additional 25,000 seats every day across 2,400 services, reducing overcrowding and meeting our aim to increase seating capacity across the network by 23% by the end of 2019.

We will decarbonise Scotland's rail services by 2035, ahead of the UK's target of 2040. The Stirling, Dunblane and Alloa and Shotts routes are now served by electric trains, and the new electrified route between Glasgow and Edinburgh is reducing journey times on this busy line.

We are also developing proposals to introduce greener, faster, more comfortable and more reliable services for communities on the East Kilbride to Glasgow line, including options for electrification.

We are moving to the design and development phase for re-opening the Levenmouth rail link. We will promote an integrated plan including bus and active travel, as well as working with partners to maximise the benefits of our investment.

We are investing £4.85 billion between this year and 2024 to support a high performing, more resilient rail infrastructure, as well as a range of improvements identified in and through the Rail Investment strategy. These include completion of the Glasgow Queen Street station redevelopment by spring 2020, the new station at Robroyston by December this year and the new station at Kintore in May next year, as well as the introduction of a new and improved service between Aberdeen and Inverness by the end of the year.

We will continue to work with the UK Government on its review of the structure of the rail industry and the way passenger rail services are delivered, pushing for further devolution of rail powers to ensure our railway and its integrated operation is accountable to the Scottish Parliament.



Buses

The Transport Bill will provide tools for local authorities to improve bus services in their area. It includes the power for councils to franchise or even run bus services, but ownership is not the key issue. At its heart, the Bill provides a new model for partnership between local authorities and bus operators.

We will bring forward a step change in investment with over £500 million for improved bus infrastructure to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services and raise bus usage. This work will make bus travel a more attractive and reliable option and reduce emissions.

This year we are also working to extend the National Concessionary Travel Scheme, providing free bus travel for people accompanying eligible disabled children under the age of 5.

We will work with stakeholders to review the option of extending public transport concessions to people under 26, reporting on progress in the coming year.

Safe roads

Safe and efficient transport links are essential to sustaining economic growth by improving access to markets and increasing productivity, as well as making sure that our country is accessible to tourists. Our road infrastructure also needs to be compatible with our ambitions to tackle climate change.

In the past year, we have continued to maintain our trunk road network, fully opened the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route and begun work on the A77 Maybole Bypass.

We will continue to maintain the trunk road network in line with international best practice. In addition, we will make further improvements in key transport infrastructure this year, focusing on securing the investment needed to complete the dualling of the A9 between Perth and Inverness – as we do that, we will continue to invest in facilities for walkers, cyclists and equestrians on this route.

Transport of the future

Transport is undergoing a period of rapid technological transformation which is an enormous opportunity for innovation.

We want Scotland to be at the forefront of developments in Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and are well positioned to offer high quality test and demonstrator opportunities to developers and industry. We will publish a roadmap for adoption of these technologies later this year and support an autonomous bus trial on trunk roads between Fife and Edinburgh starting in summer 2020.

We have also been driving innovation on payment and journey planning. Building on our ongoing work to introduce smart ticketing across Scotland's bus, rail, ferry, subway and tram networks, we will procure the digital technology needed for users to plan their journey across all public transport types and active travel, see different cost options and find out journey duration.

In the coming year, we will carry out a study on 'tap in tap out' fares services and begin feasibility work for concessionary ticketing on mobile technology.

Our £2 million Mobility as a Service Investment Fund launched in summer this year and funding will be awarded to successful projects in November. The Fund will help develop innovative solutions to reduce reliance on private cars by:

- supporting our rural and island communities' future transport needs
- tackling inequalities and improve accessibility and mobility on the public transport network
- providing tourists with smarter ways to access public transport



Chapter 3

IMPROVING OUTCOMES THROUGH OUR PUBLIC SERVICES



Improving outcomes and the wellbeing of the people of Scotland is central to Scotland's *National Performance Framework* and part of our commitment to achieving the *UN Sustainable Development Goals*.

Public services make a deep and lasting contribution to the wellbeing of our communities. It is our responsibility to deliver high quality, accessible and effective public services, underpinned by values of kindness, dignity, compassion, openness and transparency. This is central to shaping the kind of country that we want to be.

HEALTHY AND ACTIVE

Improvements in health, both physical and mental, are central to our wellbeing and success as a nation. This Government will continue to up the pace of improvement and change within Scotland's health and social care services and improve access to services.

We have established a clear set of priorities and key actions for government and for local health and care services. These focus on the delivery of better patient care, better health and better value for the people of Scotland, so that we live longer, healthier lives at home or in a homely setting.

To support this work, we continue to invest record levels in our NHS and community health services, spending £120 per person more on frontline health services than the UK average. We are attracting record numbers of staff to work in those services, helping us to build a strong health and social care workforce, who are supported and valued for what they do.

Mental health

In last year's Programme for Government, we set out comprehensive actions on mental health, with a particular focus on the needs of our children and young people. We recognised the need to support and treat people in the right place and at the right times, valuing both community and specialist mental health services.

There is no doubt that mental health is taken more seriously now than in the past but there is still much more to do. This year we continue to build on this foundation, as we develop services and support that can be accessed across all ages.

Investing in early years mental health

Although it is common to have periods of worry during pregnancy, for a significant number of women additional mental health support is needed. We know that the earlier that support is provided, the better for both mother and baby.

In February, we published recommendations to drive up standards of perinatal and infant mental healthcare, supported by a £50 million funding commitment. During 2019 and 2020, we will:

- support the third sector to deliver counselling and befriending services for women who might benefit from additional support in their community
- invest £825,000 to increase specialist staffing levels at the two current Mother and Baby Units at St John's Hospital in NHS Lothian and Leverndale Hospital in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, enabling them to become centres of expertise

- support the development of a community perinatal mental health service across Scotland. Backed by £5 million of investment, this will focus on women with mild to moderate symptoms, allowing them to quickly access support from, for example, cognitive behavioural therapists and psychological therapists
- make £3 million available to support the establishment of integrated infant mental health hubs across Scotland. These will create a multi-agency model of infant mental health provision to meet the needs of families experiencing significant adversity, including infant developmental difficulties, parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and trauma

24/7 crisis support for children, young people and their families



Improving support for children and young people

Last year we established the Children and Young People's Mental Health Taskforce to provide recommendations for improvements in provision for children and young people's mental health in Scotland.

In response to its initial recommendations, we invested an additional £4 million in Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to provide 80 new staff.

This year, working jointly with COSLA, we will take forward the Taskforce's concluding recommendations. We are establishing community wellbeing services across Scotland, focusing initially on children and young people from ages 5-24. This will be an open-access model and referrals can be made by those who work with and support children and young people. Crucially, children and young people will also be able to self-refer to the service. We will also scope out how this service can be made available in the future to people of all ages across Scotland.

We will continue to progress the actions we set out last year. The first tranche of the 350 additional counsellors across Scotland's secondary schools are in place this academic year – all will be in place by next September. Fifty additional school nurses will start training this year, with further tranches to follow until 250 are in training by 2022. We will implement the recommendations of the Personal and Social Education Review and embed whole-school approaches to supporting wellbeing by March 2021.

We have been supporting testing of the Distress Brief Intervention programme in Aberdeen, Inverness, Borders and Lanarkshire. Supported by funding of £7.9 million, the pilot projects are providing help to people aged 16 and over. Interim findings tell us that the programme is preventing suicidal behaviour and, as a consequence, is saving lives. By April 2020, we will review how the programme could be extended to those aged 15 and younger.

In addition, we will:

- develop our new 24/7 crisis support specifically for children and young people and their families. We will create a national service which links with police and emergency health services and introduce a text service so children and young people can text as well as phone to access help
- set out and embed clear national expectations on standards and specifications for CAMHS and other specialist services across Scotland to reduce rejected referrals
- work with NHS Boards to deliver the ambitious trajectories for waiting times improvements for CAMHS (and Psychological Therapies) set out in their Annual Operational Plans, supported by £15.5 million of funding this year
- take forward the recommendations of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland's independent review into the mental health services for young people in custody

Lifelong support for good mental health

To better support adult mental health services we will establish a new Adult Mental Health Collaborative so public services, the third sector and communities can work together to improve support to people suffering from mental ill health.

We have already committed to providing 800 additional mental health professionals in key settings such as Accident and Emergency, GP practices, custody and prisons by 2021-22. This will help to ensure that people have better access to mental health support at a time and place where they may need it the most. To date, over 260 staff have already been recruited and we are on track for recruitment to reach our target and deliver these vitally important roles.

Recognising the importance of working together across services, we will take forward the work of the National Distress Intervention Group to ensure that services from across our health, justice and social care system are brought together to focus on the needs of any person experiencing distress, particularly those with multiple, complex needs.

We will also:

- establish the Scottish Mental Health Policy and Research Forum to promote excellence in and improve the quality and quantity of mental health clinical research in Scotland
- enable the work of the independent reviews of the Mental Health Act and forensic mental health services so that the rights of individuals are protected

Last year saw the full national rollout of the Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy service across all 14 territorial Health Boards and referral rates continue to rise. To further improve this service, we will develop self-referral access to online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for anyone with mild to moderate depression and explore specifically how it can be used to support young people.

We will also:

- establish a Personality Disorder Managed Network to improve services, supporting a national roll out of patient self-management training
- invest £400,000 to develop improvements to early intervention psychosis services, ensuring that people suffering from psychosis anywhere in Scotland get timely access to effective care and treatment

We continue to take action to prevent suicide in Scotland. New mental health and suicide prevention workforce development resources have been produced for a range of settings, and we have asked all NHS Boards to include mental health and suicide prevention training as an essential element of local Workforce Development Plans. Last year, we established a National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group to help drive implementation of our Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

In the coming year, we will work with partners to:

- develop and promote best practice in local suicide prevention planning and learning reviews of suicides
- extend suicide prevention workforce development
- support implementation of measures to support those in crisis and for those who have been bereaved by suicide

Learning disabilities, neurodiversity and dementia

The vast majority of people with learning disabilities live in the community and play their full part in it. But they are faced with a range of barriers which we must address.

Through the *Keys to Life Strategy* – published in 2013 and recently refreshed – we have helped to change the lives of people with learning disabilities.

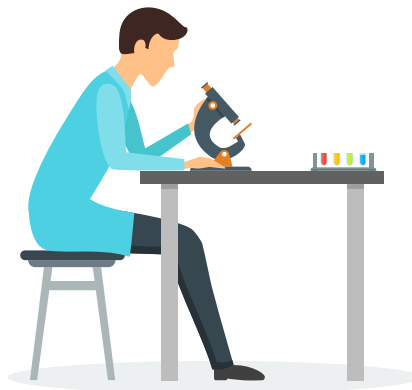
To support autistic people and their families, we have:

- developed a national anti-stigma campaign to improve how autistic people and their families are understood within their communities and launched a fund to remove barriers to employment for autistic people
- commissioned a National Autism Implementation Team to develop evidence-based improvements to reduce waits for diagnosis, improve autistic children's education experiences and increase access to employment
- worked in partnership with Education Scotland to update the online Autism Education Toolbox to improve teachers' knowledge of autism

Working with primary care teams and other partners in a number of areas, we will pilot health screening services specifically tailored to the needs of people with learning disabilities. We will also develop an online autism support service to help people live positively with autism while reducing demand for services through CAMHS, Psychological Therapies and other public services.

National Brain Health Centre

to reduce the risk of dementia



Scotland's Third National Dementia Strategy aims to deliver high quality, person-centred support for people with dementia, their families and carers from the point of diagnosis to the end of life. This year we have:

- supported local delivery of the national dementia post-diagnostic service
- piloted work to increase the accessibility of diagnosis and support in primary care settings
- funded two national dementia workforce programmes
- co-funded Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Nurse Consultants across NHS Boards
- supported a new reform agenda to modernise specialist NHS dementia care

In the coming year, we will:

- fund a new large-scale project to test integrated, intensive dementia home care
- establish Scotland's first national Brain Health Centre. This body will promote positive brain health as a way of reducing the risk of developing some dementias, linking with wider work to help encourage clinical research trial recruitment in Scotland as well as clinical research investment
- engage widely, including with service users and carers and statutory third sector and independent sector partners, to develop our fourth National Dementia Strategy, building on our internationally recognised action in areas such as rights-based care and post-diagnostic support

By the end of this year, we will publish Scotland's first ever National Action Plan on Neurological Conditions. It will set out how people with neurological conditions and their carers are involved in decisions about care and support, how we will improve the provision of coordinated health and social care and how we will build a sustainable neurological workforce for the future.

Helping people to live longer, healthier lives

Helping people to live healthier lives takes more than government action. The whole public sector, third sector organisations and people across Scotland have an important role to play in reducing health inequalities and improving healthy life expectancy. Health inequalities are a symptom of wider socio-economic inequalities which will inhibit our success as a country. We will continue to take action to close the gap.

As set out across this Programme for Government, tackling issues such as poverty and improving the quality of work are as important as reducing smoking rates and addressing obesity.

Work is well underway with COSLA and The Scottish branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) to develop the new public health body, Public Health Scotland, which will launch next year. It will help to shape public health improvement across the whole of Scotland and enable us to make best use of Scotland's public health assets – data and intelligence and our public health professionals – in supporting local areas to create the right conditions for supporting health and wellbeing.

We have already started work to improve the range of weight management services for people being treated for, or who are at high risk of, type 2 diabetes. Backed by investment of £42 million, early adopters have been using this funding to redesign and deliver weight management services in line with the national guidelines. Learning from their experiences, all Health Boards have now received funding to help them develop plans for weight management services and these will begin to become available over the coming year, helping to achieve our ambition to halve childhood obesity by 2030.

We have consulted on restricting the promotion and marketing of food and drink high in fat, sugar or salt where they are sold to the public and will bring forward a Bill on Restricting Foods Promotions for introduction in next year's legislative programme.

Our Tobacco Action Plan focuses on addressing health inequalities and targeting smoking rates in the communities where people find it most difficult to quit. We have also banned tobacco in prisons. We will seek views on further restrictions on advertising of nicotine vapour products, to discourage non-smokers, children and young people from taking up vaping, and we will introduce a no-smoking perimeter around hospital buildings.

We continue to work with Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit and Medics Against Violence to expand the Navigator programme. This programme engages with people who have been affected by violence aiming to break the cycle of violence and ease the pressure that violence places on health, social care and justice services.

This year, we aim to extend the service, ensuring that people attending A&E with complex needs and chaotic lives are provided with the support they need to make positive changes in their lives. The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit is also exploring trialing this approach in community and justice settings such as custody suites, providing support to vulnerable people affected by trauma to make sure that they are able to access the services they need.

Tackling the harm associated with the use of illicit drugs and alcohol

This Government has taken radical steps to tackle alcohol misuse. Since the introduction of minimum unit pricing, alcohol sales have fallen to their lowest level since 1994.

This year, we will take further action to tackle the issues associated with use of illicit drugs and stop the rising number of drug deaths. We currently provide £53.8 million each year to Alcohol and Drug Partnerships, supplemented by £20 million annually following our 2017-18 Programme for Government. But we need to go further.

We will now make an additional £20 million of funding available over two years. This frontline funding will include:

- providing funding to allow our new Drug Deaths Taskforce to support innovative projects, test new approaches and drive forward specific work to improve the quality of services
- establishing joint working protocols between alcohol and drug services and mental health services to improve access, assessment and outcomes from January 2020
- developing a national pathway for Opiate Substitute Therapy to make sure that it is effective across the country and help to reduce stigma
- establishing an Inclusive Scotland Fund to support a number of local areas to involve people with lived experience of severe, multiple disadvantage in developing whole system approaches to improve outcomes

We are doing everything we can in Scotland to save lives but the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 remains reserved to the UK Government. Some steps we support, such as introducing medically supervised overdose prevention facilities, are not possible under the current arrangements.

The UK Government must recognise that we are facing a public health emergency in Scotland and they need to take the necessary steps to give Scotland the additional powers we need to help save lives.

We will:

- consult on drug law reform, setting out the changes we would want to make to the 1971 Act in the event that UK Government agrees to devolve the powers in the Act
- hold a summit in Glasgow to identify further steps to tackle this tragedy and ensure that the voices of those with experience of drugs and their families are heard

Further £20 million to help reduce drugs deaths



Alongside this work, we will take other action to tackle public health issues and health inequalities.

We will put in place a Women's Health Plan. In the coming year, it will take action to:

- ensure rapid and easily-accessible postnatal contraception
- improve access to abortion and contraception services for adolescents and young women
- improve services for women undergoing the menopause, including increasing the understanding and knowledge of women, families, healthcare professionals and employers
- reduce inequalities in health outcomes which affect women, such as endometriosis and antenatal care
- reduce inequalities in health outcomes for women's general health, including work on cardiac disease

Our Active Scotland work has increased support to Community Sports Hubs in our most deprived communities. We have also collaborated with partners to increase women's and girls' participation in sports and provided £1 million of funding for the Changing Lives Through Sport and Physical Activity Fund.

This year, we will create a new Community Sport Bond worth up to £5 million. We know that, for supporter and community groups, not having access to capital funds has been the main barrier to them being able to take ownership stakes in their local clubs when the opportunity has arisen. The Bond will empower communities and groups and strengthen local decision-making by giving groups the chance to acquire a share or control of their local sports club. To be eligible to apply for the Bond, groups must show clear community focus and support and, in particular, demonstrate how involvement in the running of their club would be used to support women and girls' participation in sports.

Help for communities and groups to acquire a share of local sports clubs



In addition, we will:

- work to eliminate Hepatitis C in Scotland by 2024, by increasing the number of people treated each year. By getting the message out that anyone who has ever been at risk should get tested and, if necessary, take a short course of medication, we will aim to eliminate this fatal virus six years earlier than expected by the World Health Organization
- enhance the current vitamins scheme in Scotland, providing free vitamin D for children and to breastfeeding mothers. The scheme launched in August for breastfeeding mothers and children under a year old and will expand to become available to all children under 3
- establish Precision Medicine Alliance Scotland to accelerate the development and implementation of precision medicine, focusing on conditions of major importance in Scotland, including diseases that disproportionately impact on those at risk of socio-economic disadvantage

Women's Health Plan

to tackle health inequalities



We have passed legislation to introduce an opt-out system of organ and tissue donation – it will come into force in autumn next year and aims to increase the number of successful donations in Scotland, while ensuring that there are safeguards in place to respect a person's wishes. We will run a high profile awareness-raising campaign before the new system is introduced and on a regular basis thereafter so people know about the changes and understand what choices they have.

Integrated health and social care services

Improving our nation's health and wellbeing needs high quality and joined-up health and social care services – no matter whether those services are provided by the NHS, local government or the third and independent sectors.

Our work to integrate health and social care has changed the way key services are delivered, putting greater emphasis on supporting people in their own homes and communities and reducing the inappropriate use of hospitals and care homes.

There is evidence that our efforts are working. For example, there has been a reduction in unplanned overnight stays in hospital and many of our health and social care partnerships are making good progress in reducing their delays in hospital discharge, meaning many people are being cared for effectively at home, or in a homely setting, for longer.

We are also working with local partnerships to improve the planning of children's services and the positive impacts of this will be incorporated into our review of children's services guidance later this year.



But we want to go further. This year, the Scottish Government and COSLA are taking forward a series of actions to increase the pace and effectiveness of integration, based on the *Review of Progress with Integration*, published in February. This includes:

- developing new statutory guidance for community engagement and participation in the design and delivery of health and social care services
- developing a framework for community-based health and social care integrated services to help ensure that what works to improve outcomes in local community settings is shared and promoted across the whole system
- carrying out an audit of existing national leadership programmes and improving collaborative working with all health and social care partners, including the third and independent sectors
- empowering Integration Authorities to use all of the resources allocated to them in ways which work best for the people and communities they serve and to improve the understanding of accountabilities and responsibilities across the system
- improving strategic inspection by making sure it better reflects how different bodies need to work together to improve outcomes

Reforming social care

Social care support is an investment in Scotland's people, society and economy. One in 24 people of all ages in Scotland received social care support and services during 2017-18.

Social care is about helping people to participate in, and contribute to, society by supporting independent living and ensuring that their dignity and human rights are protected. We are committed to supporting people to stay at home or in a homely setting with maximum independence for as long as possible, with their support guided by their needs, priorities and choices.

We recognise the challenges in meeting the need for social care support in Scotland. We also know that self-directed support is not yet fully embedded as Scotland's approach to social care support. Together with partners, and guided by people who use social care support, we are taking actions to accelerate change.

A reform of the adult social care support programme launched this year, led by the expertise and experience of people who use social care support and those who work in the sector. Its priorities include:

- a shared agreement on the purpose of adult social care support, with a focus on human rights
- ensuring social care support is centred on a person, how they want to live their life and what is important to them
- valuing and supporting social workers and social care workers and unpaid carers
- investment in social care support, and considering how it is paid for in the future

This year, we will:

- develop a future vision for a sustainable care home sector as part of the wider health and social care landscape
- work with health and social care partnerships, local authorities, providers and improvement organisations to make it easier to design and implement models of care which support the workforce to provide flexible, consistent care and support for people across care at home, care homes and other types of support
- continue to support the sector to develop a national framework agreement for both purchased and commissioned care and support services. This will increase consistency in the way in which support is commissioned, purchased and delivered across the country, and will strengthen the focus on person-centred and outcomes-focused practice
- support Social Work Scotland to work with local authorities and others to design and test a framework of practice for self-directed support across Scotland, including approaches to assessment and resource allocation. This will result in more consistent experiences, making it easier for supported people to move from one area of Scotland to another. Local flexibility will ensure authorities can work with their communities to develop systems that suit local strengths and needs, particularly in remote and rural areas

We will create a blueprint for the development of hospital at home services across Scotland, based on existing good practice in areas such as Lanarkshire and Fife. The blueprint will form part of the Framework for Community Health and Social Care Integrated Services, which is currently under development.

We implemented Frank's Law in April this year, supported by a £30 million investment. It means that anyone of any age who has been assessed as needing personal care has access to it, free of charge.

To make sure that the rights of Scotland's unpaid carers are secured, we have developed the Carers Act Implementation Plan, backed by an extra £10.5 million for local authorities this year.

We are investing a further £1 million this year to help carers centres build capacity and to fund local projects to develop and spread best practice for involving carers in decisions about hospital discharge. We will also launch a national marketing campaign to improve awareness of carers and their rights to support.

We are committed to ensuring our work always recognises the impacts on carers across different aspects of their lives such as employment, benefits and education. We will soon be consulting on our plans for a Carers Strategic Policy Statement and will announce final plans early next year.

We have consulted on proposals to reform the law on adults with incapacity. We want to make sure that people receive more support to make their own decisions and have better access to the care that they need. There are a number of sensitive areas that we continue to work on with stakeholders and, in the meantime, we will make improvements in training and support for those who work with adults with incapacity.

We will also provide updated guidance on power of attorney to help to make the law in this area more accessible and empower people to plan for the future.

Health and social care in prisons

We are working to improve how health and social care services are provided to people in prison and how these services can tackle health-related causes of offending such as drug and alcohol misuse.

We have established a new Scottish Prison Care Network and published a *Prison Health Information Dashboard*. This month, we will begin to test new approaches to delivering integrated social care which will improve the services provided to people in custody, helping them to rehabilitate and return to their communities when they are released. We will also publish a new Health and Social Care Strategy for Prisons over the coming year.

Providing the right healthcare and support when it is needed and at whatever stage of life

We are investing in a range of initiatives to improve primary care services, including increasing the number of GPs entering training, enhancing primary care teams with link workers, paramedics and pharmacists, investing in General Practice Nursing, providing support to retain GPs and setting a target to recruit 800 more GPs over 10 years. This investment will reach an additional £500 million a year by 2021-22 in primary care, of which £250 million will directly support General Practice.

Based on our new Scottish GP contract, all Integration Authorities now have locally-agreed Primary Care Improvement Plans. Plans for this year include local workforce planning, infrastructure development and patient engagement – work which will improve the primary care people receive in their communities. We are supporting GP practices via the GP Premises Sustainability Fund which we will increase from £30 million to £50 million this year.

Our £2.5 million Community Challenge Fund, encouraging people to take positive action to improve oral health, launched this summer. Work is underway to accredit General Dental Practitioners with the skills and equipment to see patients in care homes and early adopters began to operate this summer.

We continue to implement the recommendations from the Community Eyecare Services Review. A new Once-for-Scotland shared ophthalmology patient record will launch in the coming year, making sure patients are safely directed towards accredited community optometrists. This high quality community-based care will increase service capacity across Scotland which is particularly important as our population ages and demand on eyecare services increase.

We have strengthened the Chronic Medication Service, with over 750,000 patients now registered at their local pharmacy and community pharmacists providing care for people with stable long-term conditions. This year, the service, now called the 'Medicines: Care and Review Service', will continue to improve how pharmacists can provide personalised care.

NHS 24 is improving its services by introducing a new clinical supervision model which will increase the number of patients who receive the advice they need at the first point of contact, without needing to wait for a call back.

This year, we will test how to widen NHS 24's support to GP practices in-hours. Patients contacting their GP for a same-day appointment will have their symptoms triaged by NHS 24 to help make sure that they are directed to the most appropriate healthcare professional for their needs.

Out-of-hours services are under pressure. The National Out of Hours Oversight Group will continue to drive forward improvements and sustainability in out-of-hours care in the short, medium and longer term. An early action will be to provide grants to GP practices to deliver training in out-of-hours services.

We will provide new online learning modules for the health and social care workforce to help people who have lost their voice or have difficulty speaking. This will help staff to better identify people who may need or benefit from communication equipment and provide help to use that equipment.

Stroke: prevention, treatment and care

Over the past 10 years, the number of people in Scotland dying from stroke has decreased by 42%. This is significant progress but we want to strive for even better outcomes. In the coming year, we will develop a programme to improve stroke pathways and services, including prevention, treatment and care. We will:

- appoint a Specialty Adviser to the Chief Medical Officer on Stroke Care
- review and improve the current stroke care bundle to improve outcomes for patients
- collaborate across government on stroke prevention and raising awareness of the signs of stroke
- begin work to scope out and define what a progressive stroke unit looks like
- ensure that a national planning framework is in place for a high quality and clinically safe thrombectomy service

Of ultimate importance is making sure that primary care meets the needs of the communities it serves. We know that some groups of people face challenges accessing healthcare. To help, we have published new guidance on GP Practice registration which will make it easier for marginalised people to access healthcare and make that access more consistent across the country.

We know that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to primary healthcare. Our next phase of primary care reform will promote innovation and co-produced local solutions, with a focus on rural and deprived communities. But we want to know more about what communities need. We are considering the latest findings of the Health and Care Experience Survey and we will outline our plans in the coming months.

Access to services

Access to care at the right time is an essential part of improving Scotland's health and wellbeing. As well as making sure people have access to the services they need, all Health Boards will have plans in place by the end of this year to implement flexible visiting making it easier for patients to see their loved ones while in hospital.

Our Accident and Emergency services are the highest performing in the UK and have been for more than four years. We have opened new Major Trauma Centres in Aberdeen and Dundee and work is progressing towards the opening of Centres in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Our work to coordinate performance in how trauma is dealt with is also supported by the appointment of Trauma Co-ordinators in each region and the newly updated plan for managing Major Incidents with Mass Casualties. The new Trauma app will go live in the west of Scotland next August.

ScotSTAR (North) opened in April, helping patients involved in serious accidents and those in remote locations. Scotland now has full coverage by pre-hospital critical care teams – meaning patients across the country will be equally cared for in life-threatening situations.

We have been working to reduce unintentional harm which is estimated to cause around 500,000 A&E visits and one million GP appointments every year, including providing advice to families and supporting Child Safety Week.

Following the decision that the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People in Edinburgh was unable to open on time due to problems with ventilation systems, we have commissioned a review to identify the factors that led to the delay.

We have also instructed NHS National Services Scotland to review all current and recently completed major NHS capital projects to provide assurances that the required high standards have been met in their construction and renovation.

Patient safety is paramount – we will establish a national body with responsibility for the oversight of the design, construction and maintenance of major infrastructure developments within NHS Scotland. It is likely to involve a compliance function to ensure that construction and future maintenance is in line with statutory and other guidance.

We will set out specific plans for the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People following the reviews.

Tackling cancer

We continue our work to prevent cancer, detect it early and treat it effectively. Through our current cancer strategy, we have invested over £54 million to-date, including more than £4.5 million in key treatments and £500,000 in supporting work with children and young people with cancer. We have increased uptake in the new bowel cancer test and reduced the risk of cervical cancer due to the HPV vaccine.



In the coming year, we will:

- work in close collaboration with NHS Boards to ensure cancer waiting times standards are met by spring 2021. We are supporting this with the Effective Cancer Management Framework and education sessions for staff to improve monitoring of patients with suspicion of cancer and make sure that cases are escalated effectively when required
- target our Detect Cancer Early social marketing campaigns to people who are most likely to present with later stage disease and less likely to participate in screening
- change national screening programmes where it is appropriate to ensure those in greatest need benefit fully
- begin work to pilot self-sampling for cervical screening at a national level
- further develop our approach to bowel and breast screening to enable us to better target areas of low uptake, particularly in our most deprived communities
- support the dissemination of clinically-refreshed Scottish Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer to support primary care clinicians to ensure those with symptoms suspicious of cancer are put on the right pathway at the right time
- invest an initial £2 million in technology to improve the detection of advanced prostate cancer

We are also committed to making sure our plans take account of the latest developments in cancer research, treatment and technology. This year, learning from our experiences to date, we will refresh our cancer strategy, making sure that we invest in the best services possible and deliver the best outcomes for people with cancer. We will develop defined and consistent diagnostic and treatment pathways for different types of cancer, including those which occur in small numbers.

As well as providing the best clinical care, we will invest £18 million in a partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support to make sure everyone at the point of a cancer diagnosis has contact with a link officer to talk about their specific needs and receive information and support tailored to them. Macmillan will also help people find financial, emotional and practical support that is right for them, meaning that patients and their families are looked after from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond.

Reducing waiting times

As part of our £850 million Waiting Times Improvement Plan, we are making £102 million available to Health Boards in 2019-20 to drive down the length of time patients wait for appointments and procedures, prioritising those who are waiting the longest. We will increase capacity in our health service, increase clinical effectiveness and efficiency and implement new models of care. By spring 2021:

- 95% of outpatients will wait less than 12 weeks to be seen
- 100% of inpatients/daycases will wait less than 12 weeks to be treated
- 95% of cancer patients will receive their first treatment within 62 days of an urgent suspicion of cancer referral

This year's investment will support more procedures such as cataract removal and hip and knee replacements, as well as increasing the number of outpatient and diagnostic appointments. It will also support work to increase capacity, including additional workforce, at the network of elective and diagnostic centres currently being created.

To provide longer-term capacity for elective procedures, construction has begun on the expansion of the Golden Jubilee Hospital. While that is underway, we have increased capacity in endoscopy, cardiology and ophthalmology by installing an interim mobile Cath Lab, increased general surgery activity, increased the number of additional cataract procedures and installed a second CT scanner.

We have brought forward the opening of an additional theatre in NHS Forth Valley, allowing more joint replacement operations to be undertaken. We have strengthened the management of patients with treatable pre-operative anaemia and trialed Active Clinical Referral Triage. In the coming year, construction work will also begin on elective centres in Grampian, Highland and Lothian.

This year, we will continue to deliver the Waiting Times Improvement Plan, working with partners to apply quality improvement expertise to help us to deliver sustainable improvements in waiting times whilst maintaining or improving the quality of care.

The power to drive improvement in performance often lies at hospital level. We want to empower hospital managers to make the kinds of changes we need to see to meet our ambition. We will develop a strategic plan setting out how we will strengthen responsibilities and capacity in hospital-level management to drive better performance and make sure that clinical judgement is better mainstreamed into hospital management decisions.

Digital technology can help to transform health services, making sure that they meet the needs of people across Scotland and are more accessible. Ensuring that people are involved in their design helps to overcome barriers to using online services as they arise.

The Attend Anywhere service is a web-based platform that gives patients the opportunity to video call their healthcare provider. In the past year, the Attend Anywhere Scale-up Challenge has seen increased usage and reports of significant savings in both patient and clinician travel and reducing travel-related emissions. It will now roll out to primary care and social care services so more services can be delivered closer to people's homes. We will also scale up the Blood Pressure service for remote diagnosis and management of hypertension.

This year, we will work with partners to trial new approaches to digital services, focusing on frailty, breathlessness and survivors of abuse, opening up services to those who may struggle to travel due to their condition using technology such as video consultations, telecare or home health monitoring.

Our workforce

All of us who have engaged with our health and social care services know that all those who work in these services make a huge difference to the lives of people and communities across Scotland.

We and our partners are taking forward a range of actions to strengthen the sector through the National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan.

Earlier this year, we launched a platform to improve the data, tools and methodologies available to help plan for the future. It will bring together, for the first time, a common evidence base that can be used by workforce planners and is already being used to identify workforce gaps and develop new staffing models.

This autumn, we will publish the results of an analysis undertaken to support recruitment and retention of staff.

To encourage more people to choose the sector for a career and encourage a diverse workforce, we will launch a national campaign early next year and we will launch an online careers resource this autumn to help improve career pathways. We will also work with national and local partners to take forward the recommendations set out in the Fair Work in Scotland's Social Care Sector 2019 report to improve fair work practices across the social care workforce.

We will continue to develop a positive working culture. This will include actively strengthening our policies and governance in relation to whistleblowing, bullying and harassment to make sure those who work in our NHS feel safe, protected at work and able to speak out. We will invest £138,000 to fund tailored mental health resources for our emergency responders.

We will improve consistency in employee experience and workforce practices with the aim of ensuring that NHS Scotland is a modern, consistent and exemplar employer.

We will launch a national recruitment campaign for nursing, midwifery, allied health professionals and healthcare scientists later this year and a campaign for social work and social care professionals in 2020.



We are on track to create around 2,600 new nursing and midwifery training places over this Parliament, with a student intake of over 4,000 this year – a 7.6% increase on last year – and the bursary for nursing and midwifery students will rise to £10,000 per year from 2020. In conjunction with local authorities, we will explore the potential to create new Modern Apprenticeship frameworks.

We have already announced an increase in medical undergraduate numbers. By 2021 medical school places will have increased by 190 over 2016 levels. To help ensure that Scotland has a world-class and sustainable medical workforce, we will fund an additional 105 foundation places for medical graduates by 2022. These will accommodate the first of the additional graduates and enable them to proceed to the next stage of their training in order to become qualified doctors. The new places will create a greater range of placements for trainee doctors, particularly in general practice and psychiatry and in remote or rural parts of Scotland. We will also develop proposals for a new medical school.

We have established the Scottish Global Health Co-ordination Unit which has a facilitating role in the co-ordination of health partnership work in NHS Scotland. Our unique approach to global citizenship builds on best practice and includes developing ethical and sustainable ways to donate surplus NHS equipment where it is needed most at home and overseas.

To make sure that our social workers are equipped to deliver for the people they work with, we will improve how newly-qualified social workers are supported. Based on the results of pilots due to conclude in summer next year, we will roll out a national approach to a supported year for newly qualified social workers to make sure that the training they receive during that first year of employment reflects the latest developments in policy and practice.

GROWING UP LOVED, SAFE AND RESPECTED

As well as making sure our health service provides specialist support for those who need it, we must ensure all our children and young people have the opportunity to develop good health and wellbeing and get the best start in life. We are investing at every stage to ensure our children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected.



Getting it Right for Every Child is the approach we take to supporting families by making sure children and young people receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. It is internationally renowned. By the end of this year, we will refresh our policy and guidance documents, updating our practice based on what we know works best for children.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

We continue work to address adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), including abuse, neglect and a range of difficult household and other experiences which negatively impact healthy development. We recognise the role that inequalities play and we are focused on tackling child poverty, addressing gender inequality and ensuring all children and young people can fulfil their rights.

We are committed to preventing ACEs and supporting children, young people and adults affected by childhood adversity and trauma. The evidence is clear that it is never too late to provide people with the help, kindness and compassion to address early life adversity.

In line with our four areas for action set out in last year's Programme for Government we are driving progress.

We have provided an additional 509 health visitors in Scotland, who are identifying and addressing needs early and improving outcomes for children and families.

We will continue to support our Family Nurse Partnership Programme this year. It provides intensive support to young mothers during pregnancy and for the first two years of a child's life. It has reached over 7,000 families since its inception and helped mothers to build the confidence and skills they need to provide the right support for their baby, and support their own mental health and confidence as well as housing, education and employment.

This year, we will develop Scottish standards for the Barnahus concept, forming a framework for a child-centred approach to delivering justice, care and recovery for children who have experienced trauma. We will publish draft standards for consultation at the end of this year and finalised standards in 2020.

We are helping children affected by parental imprisonment by continuing to support prison visitor centres, and the Scottish Prison Service has set out a five-year strategy to help those in prison and their families.

We have invested £1.35 million in the National Trauma Training Programme, enabling workers to recognise and respond to psychological trauma. Over 3,000 people across our public services, including police officers, nurses and social workers, have been trained to date, with training for a further 2,000 workers planned. We will expand the programme over the next two years, providing the opportunity for more frontline staff to receive training, such as those supporting Looked After Children and women receiving maternity care who have experienced sexual violence and abuse.

People working in our schools have been supported with resources to increase their understanding of ACEs and how to take a trauma-informed approach in the classroom. This year, we will support the development of trauma training packages for all organisations who come into contact with victims of crime.

We are supporting community action to prevent and respond to childhood adversity and trauma, including the Families and Communities Fund for third sector organisations and investment from the Cashback for Communities programme.

Creating lasting change in our care system

It is our job, as a society, to love our most vulnerable children and give them the best start in life, doing everything we can to make sure they grow up surrounded by kindness, compassion and understanding. Listening to young people with care experience is essential to make sure that we continue to improve our care system and help young people achieve their full potential.

We have made the Permanence and Care Excellence programme available to every local authority in Scotland, helping to make sure more children find permanent placements sooner and are able to grow up in stable, loving homes.

Our Children Bill will strengthen duties to promote contact between siblings and our Family Justice Modernisation Strategy will include provisions in relation to placing siblings together.

From spring next year, new standards to improve experiences and outcomes for vulnerable young people in secure care will come into force. We also continue to invest in our looked-after children's education, providing £8 million of funding from the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund again this year.

We will continue to work with COSLA to agree how best to take forward the recommendations of the National Review of Foster, Kinship and Adoption Care Allowances, with a view to implementation from April next year. This will improve consistency and transparency for looked-after children, their families and their carers across Scotland.

Our Advance Payment Scheme, set up to provide recognition and acknowledgement of historical child abuse in care in Scotland opened in April this year. A payment of £10,000 is available for eligible survivors who are terminally ill or over 70 years old, avoiding the need for these survivors to wait until legislation can be passed.

So far, over 75 payments have been made. We will continue to do everything possible to help survivors and their families by ensuring a simple application process and providing support to find sources of care records to make sure that no one is refused their application because of a lack of documentary evidence of having been in care.

We will take this important work forward, setting up a statutory redress scheme for anyone who has been a victim of historical child abuse whilst in care in Scotland beginning with introducing legislation in the coming year.



The Redress (Survivors of In Care Abuse) Bill will set up a financial redress scheme for survivors of historical child abuse whilst in care in Scotland

The Independent Care Review

The Independent Care Review is now in its third stage and will report its findings to us early next year. Care experienced young people have made clear, however, that we must not wait for the outcome of the Review's work before making changes to the care system.

We will:

- extend eligibility for free NHS dental care to care-experienced people between the ages of 18 and 26 to reduce the negative impacts that poor dental health can have on physical health, mental wellbeing and self-confidence
- work with local government to make sure that care-experienced young people receiving a qualifying benefit are supported with discretionary housing payments from April next year, giving them greater choice in the housing options they have and more security in their tenancies
- launch our new Job Start Payment, ensuring that care leavers will get this help if they are receiving a qualifying benefit, without having had a period of unemployment
- remove the age 26 cap on the care-experienced student bursary in time for the start of the 2020-21 academic year. People with experience of care often do not feel ready to start further or higher education immediately after leaving school – we want to support them into either further or higher education at whatever point in life they feel they are ready, no matter what age they are
- extend entitlement to funded early learning and childcare provision to 2 year olds whose parents are care-experienced. For care-experienced people, becoming a parent can be more challenging than for others because they are less likely to have reliable family support around them. We will make sure that this entitlement is in place from August next year, the same time that we begin to deliver 1140 hours of funded provision for families across Scotland
- create a new statutory provision in favour of brothers and sisters who are taken into care being placed together where it is in their best interests

Protecting our children and vulnerable people

All children in Scotland have the right to be protected from abuse or neglect. We are ensuring that effective child protection procedures are in place wherever a child is experiencing or at risk of harm.

By summer next year, we will publish revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland. Working with stakeholders, we will develop a new approach to reviewing significant protection cases and take forward a range of actions to prevent sexual offending involving children and young people.

We will publish a national dataset to support the planning and delivery of child protection services and work with our local authorities, health, education and justice sectors to make sure risk and harm are recognised and handled quickly and effectively.

We have introduced legislation to strengthen the protection of children and vulnerable people, while making the system of applying for criminal record checks more straightforward.

The Disclosure Bill makes the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme mandatory for anyone working with children or vulnerable people, such as sports coaches, and applying a renewable five-year membership rather than a lifetime membership. It will also end the automatic disclosure of all criminal offences committed as a young person, with decisions to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

The Bill will deliver a fairer regime which will provide the best possible protection for our most vulnerable people, and be simpler for employers and less invasive for the majority of users.

We will take action to improve the support and protection given to vulnerable adults at risk of harm. We will publish a three-year plan of improvement by spring next year, aiming to improve how assurance and inspection activities are undertaken, how legislation and policy make sure care is provided consistently and effectively and how data is best used to improve outcomes for adults at risk of harm.

Children's care and justice

We will invest a further £800,000 this year to strengthen Scotland's youth justice system, expanding our successful preventative partnership approach to youth crime.

We will implement the Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 as quickly and as safely as possible. That means that, as of autumn this year, no child under the age of 12 at the time of an incident will be treated as an offender in the children's hearings system, or subsequently.

We have committed to better experiences and results for all by modernising the children's hearings system. We are supporting partners to introduce new digital technology approaches to transform children's participation in their hearings, making sure discussions and decisions are accessible to all children, and we are investing £700,000 in professionalising the support to unpaid children's panel volunteers.

In spring next year, we will introduce a national children's hearings advocacy scheme, backed by £1.5 million, to further reinforce children's rights and make sure the interests of each child is at the very heart of their hearing. We will also consult on enabling joint reporting to the Crown Office and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration of all 16 and 17 year olds' offence cases.

The early years

Our work to make sure every child in Scotland gets the best start in life begins at the earliest stages. Our support to mothers during pregnancy is followed by the Baby Box containing the essentials newborns and their families need for the first few months.

Over 100,000 Baby Boxes have been received by families across the country, and they are helping to tackle inequality and improve health outcomes from the first few days of children's lives.



Early learning and childcare

Quality and nurturing early learning and childcare is the foundation from which every child can develop socially, emotionally and educationally, enabling them to reach their full potential.

From August next year our transformative expansion of early learning and childcare will begin. It will mean that all 3 and 4 year olds, and 2 year olds from disadvantaged communities, will receive 30 hours a week of funded childcare during

the school year. They will also have the option to access a smaller number of hours per week all year round. This means that our children get the best possible start in life and will allow families the opportunity to explore more work and learning opportunities. It will save families up to £4,500 per child each year. Local authorities are working hard to deliver the new entitlement and we are providing them with the support that they need.

The expansion will benefit around 80,000 families across Scotland, with an additional annual investment of £567 million by 2021-22, bringing our total investment in early learning and childcare to almost £1 billion. It aims to support children's development and narrow the attainment gap; increase family resilience through improved health and wellbeing outcomes for parents and children; and allow more parents to be in work, training or education.

Parents and carers will have greater choice of high quality early learning and childcare providers, being able to access their child's entitlement from any provider across the public, private and third sectors (including childminders) which meets the National Standard, has a place available and is willing to enter a contract with their local authority.

The full expansion will be available from August next year but we have asked local authorities to prioritise more economically disadvantaged communities for any early provision, to ensure that those who will benefit the most will also benefit first.

The new National Standard includes daily access to outdoor play and learning, support from well-qualified and supported professionals and a free nutritious meal. To ensure that our workforce is treated fairly we are also providing the funding to enable all childcare workers delivering the funded hours to be paid at least the real Living Wage.

30 hours per week early learning and childcare



Over the next year, we will continue to support local authorities and other employers to recruit the workforce needed to deliver the expansion. Our national recruitment campaign is ongoing and we will continue to work with partners to make sure it reaches minority ethnic communities so that the new workforce is diverse and represents Scotland's communities.

We will continue to work with the Scottish Funding Council and Skills Development Scotland to create more capacity in our colleges and work-based learning sectors to train staff and increase the number of Modern Apprentices following an early learning and childcare pathway.

To ensure children access their early learning and childcare in suitable premises, we are on track to meet our target of 750 new, refurbished or extended nurseries as a result of the expansion programme.

To support outdoor learning, we will accelerate our forest kindergarten training programme to make it available in all regions of Scotland by summer 2020.

Out-of-school care

High quality out-of-school care gives children opportunities to play and socialise which benefits their attainment, learning and wellbeing. It also offers a way to tackle issues like food insecurity and gives parents and carers the chance to take up employment or study, or increase their working hours.

Our draft framework for Out of School Care considers what more needs to be done to address the barriers many parents and carers face in accessing out of school care, as well as making sure children's voices are heard too. We will establish a public panel of parents, children and young people to provide ideas and feedback as we develop our plans further.

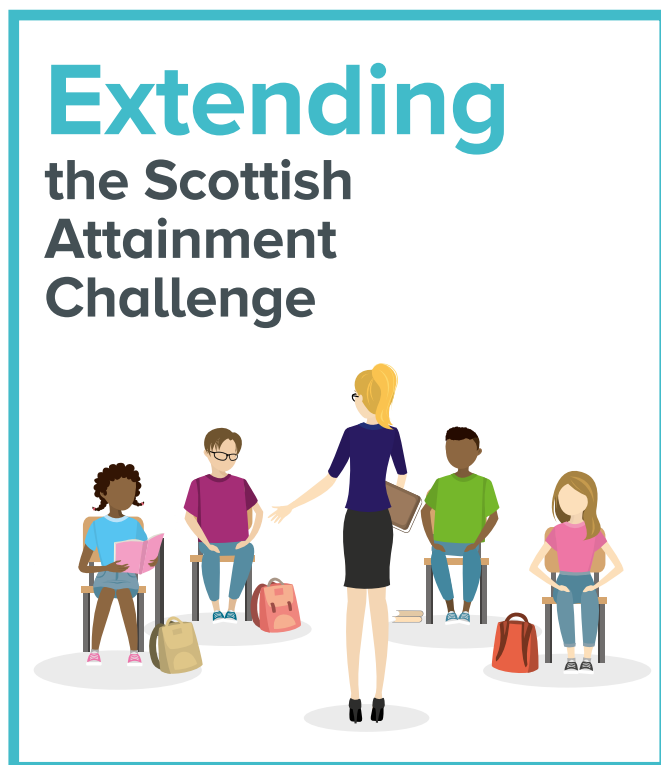
We already know that out-of-school care needs to be affordable, flexible and accessible and that there are barriers to low income families, so we are taking action now.

Over the coming year, we will invest £3 million in the Access to Childcare Fund as part of a range of measures to tackle child poverty. It will provide support to establish new projects delivering community-based childcare for low-income families. This will also provide opportunities for children within those communities to benefit from a range of activities before or after school or during the holidays. It will begin in April next year and run for two years.

Education – school and beyond

Our investment in education continues – in the last two years, there have been real terms increases in the amount of money spent on education by local authorities.

Over the last three years, teacher numbers have increased and we have ensured a fair pay deal for our teachers. Young people are achieving more qualifications and a record number are securing positive destinations after leaving full-time school education. Our universities are becoming more accessible – a greater proportion of students from the most deprived areas entered this year than ever before.



Closing the attainment gap

In the past year, we have continued our efforts to close the educational attainment gap, to make sure every child is able to achieve their potential no matter where they grow up.

We have continued to invest in the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Fund with an investment of £182 million in 2019-20. This is part of a total of £750 million being made available between 2016 and 2021.

This year's funding will put money into the hands of headteachers to provide additional targeted support to help children and young people overcome barriers to achievement related to poverty.

We will extend funding for the Scottish Attainment Challenge at current levels for a further year into 2021-22. This gives vital clarity to schools and local authorities that this support will continue.

Regional Improvement Collaboratives have been set up to cover every local authority in Scotland. Over the past year, with our additional £5 million investment, the number of teachers involved has increased and a number of regional interventions have been designed which are improving attainment, supporting curriculum development and helping headteachers and others improve their leadership skills.

This year, we will take steps to identify the support required for a wider range of education practitioners such as school librarians and college lecturers.

Attainment improves when parents are involved in their children's learning. This year, the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Pupil Equity Funding have allowed schools and local authorities to increase the number of home-school link workers, resulting in improved attendance and behaviour, earlier resolution of issues, improved contact and engagement of parents and communities. This gives parents greater confidence and ability to get involved in their child's education. We will continue this work, providing schools and local authorities with an additional package of guidance and support by the end of this year.

Attainment at all levels has increased since 2009-10 and the vast majority of headteachers report improvement in closing the poverty related gap in attainment or wellbeing. A further evaluation report on the impact of the funding will be published in spring 2020.



Additional support for learning

We need to make sure that our school system is tailored to every child, providing them with the support they need to reach their full potential.

This year, we have published guidance for local authorities on how to collect data about additional support for learning, helping us and local government to know what support is needed and where. Guidance on a presumption in favour of mainstream education was published to ensure the inclusion of children and young people who need additional support.

Based on research from Queen Margaret University, we have increased the capacity of professionals to provide additional support in the classroom through an online module for school staff and held an event to improve teachers' career pathways.

We will invest an additional £15 million in the coming year to improve the experiences of children who need additional support and their families. Working in partnership with local government, we will use this funding to secure additional frontline staff in this academic year.

Empowering schools

We have worked closely with leaders from across the education sector to empower schools, teachers and parents to make decisions about how best to run their schools for their pupils, removing the need for, and avoiding the delays associated with, taking a legislative route.

The Headteachers' Charter was published this year and we have provided draft guidance for school leaders on how headteachers can best use resources to make their own decisions about staffing, budgets, improvements and the curriculum in their schools.

Further support for headteachers will be made available this year, including a range of new and existing opportunities to enhance professional development and leadership skills.

To ensure teaching continues to be seen as a valuable career for young people and career changers, this year we will begin to deliver the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Career Pathways for Teachers.

We will also establish a Teacher Innovation Fund, providing opportunities for innovative teachers to apply for funding to help them access professional development. This will help to enhance the attractiveness of teaching as a career. Over the coming year, we will work with professional associations, local government and teaching unions to develop detailed criteria for the Fund.

Schools are further empowered when parents are involved and we have worked this year to improve the information available to parents. Information on the expansion of early learning and childcare has been made available so parents know what they are entitled to, and how to access the provision, and we have launched a parental involvement and engagement census so we can know which approaches to involving parents work best.

We will consult on amended statutory guidance for local authorities on how to ensure parents are involved in the lives of schools this autumn, publishing a final version by summer next year.

We have listened to the views of young people, setting up the Scottish Learner Panel last year. The Panel has already provided us with advice on inclusion and wellbeing, curriculum and learning and young people's participation in school life. The Panel will continue its work this year, making sure young people are a key part of shaping the future of our schools.

£15 million for additional support for learning



Healthier school meals

We are making changes that will improve our school food, help tackle childhood obesity and give our children the best start in life. We will be the first part of the UK to set maximum limits for consumption of red processed meat over the course of the school week, part of our new initiative to make school food healthier. By autumn next year, we will:

- increase the amount of fruit and vegetables served
- reduce the amount of sugar available throughout the school day
- encourage the use of fresh, local and sustainable produce

More than 360,000 school meals are served each day and, with these changes, we can make a significant impact on children's health, reduce inequality and help to protect our environment.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)

Scotland is the only part of the UK where annual funding of up to £3 million helps science centres and festivals to support STEM learning, inspiring our next generation of scientists and making science accessible for around one million people every year.

Our work on the STEM education and training strategy continues, making sure that we have the skills to take advantage of the economic opportunities offered in this sector.

We have delivered 107 bursaries, with investment of over £2 million, to help people change careers and begin to teach STEM subjects. Colleges are leading the development of 13 regional STEM hubs to join up schools and colleges with universities, science centres and employers. Intakes for STEM secondary teacher training courses has increased.

Education Scotland is working with schools to tackle unconscious bias and gender stereotyping which leads to a gender imbalance in STEM. The Scottish Funding Council, in collaboration with colleges and other partners, is also working to tackle gender imbalances and reduce gender gaps in college courses. Skills Development Scotland is working with employers and training providers to address under representation in the workplace.

This year, we will:

- provide more bursaries for career changers to train as STEM teachers and provide £2 million of grants to support ongoing STEM professional learning in schools, early learning and community learning settings
- introduce new STEM Awards for early learning and childcare providers and schools to inspire and reward excellence in STEM and work with 80 early learning and community learning centres and schools to trial a new Young STEM leaders award to support young people to inspire each other to get involved in STEM
- launch our 2019 Women Returners Programme that will support women to re-enter the workplace following a career break across a variety of industrial sectors where women are under-represented, including the STEM sector

Learning for Sustainability

Learning for Sustainability is a cross-curricular approach to learning which allows young people to explore sustainability across a number of subjects.

It helps to develop a love of the natural world and a sense of environmental stewardship. It can provide the skills to tackle climate change by learning about greenhouse gases in the sciences, assessing impact on the natural landscape in geography, calculating carbon emissions in maths and monitoring climate change over time in history.

Learning for Sustainability can also influence changes in schools, prompting sustainable approaches to waste management, catering, travel, energy usage, design and build.

Our newly-published *Action Plan* strengthens references to Learning for Sustainability within curriculum guidance and the General Teaching Council for Scotland's Professional Standards.

Education Scotland will continue to develop a repository of advice, guidance and practice examples, helping to ensure that educators are confident in covering Learning for Sustainability and all learners receive their entitlement to this vital area of education.

We also continue to fund the Eco-Schools Scotland Programme which, in 25 years, has engaged with over 64,000 teachers and 843,000 young people and seen over 4,800 Green Flags awarded.

We will fund an expansion to Keep Scotland Beautiful's Climate Ready Classrooms Programme which will see over 4,800 14-17 year olds accredited as carbon literate between 2019 and 2021. This work will not only reaffirm the importance of Learning for Sustainability but crucially help to ensure efforts to address the global climate emergency continue for generations to come.

Learning in the community

Youth work has a significant impact on the life chances of Scotland's young people. In the coming year, we will develop and launch a new National Youth Work Strategy with young people and youth workers.

We will work with the newly-formed Adult Learning Strategic Forum for Scotland to develop an Adult Learning Strategy. The involvement of learners themselves and a range of community partners, such as universities, colleges, third sector organisations and local government, will help us develop the new strategy and it will launch in the coming year.

Supporting pupils' next steps

We are committed to ensuring young people have the right advice and support to choose the career path that is right for them. To do that, we will continue to implement the recommendations of the Learner Journey Review. This year, our work includes:

- publishing a vision for our post-15 education system, rooted in the experience of learners, which shows the diversity of pathways through post-15 education and encourages all parts of the system to consider how best to support those different journeys
- delivering a national communications strategy to explain and promote the breadth of choices in the 15-24 learner journey

We will also build on the progress of the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme, having delivered its headline target to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021 – four years early. We will continue our work to establish effective partnerships between employers and education and maintain our commitment to the DYW employer-led regional groups.

Scotland's colleges enrolled over 300,000 students and employed nearly 11,000 full-time equivalent staff in 2017-18. Since 2007, we have invested over £810 million in new campuses and buildings, such as City of Glasgow College and Ayrshire College.

Work is ongoing across our colleges to improve the quality of the education offered to communities. This is guided by new quality improvement arrangements and refreshed professional standards. This is allowing colleges to target improvements for learners where they are most needed and work will continue this year to embed the approach across the college estate.

In response to Audit Scotland's report, we will work with the Scottish Funding Council to develop a medium-term estate strategy for the college sector. The strategy will help set priorities for investment, improve the student experience and support better outcomes, as well as setting out how the college estate will contribute to efforts to tackle climate change. We will publish our plans in summer next year.



It is our ambition that a child born today in one of Scotland's most deprived communities will, by the time he or she leaves school, have the same chance of entering university as a child born in one of our least deprived communities.

Our work on widening access has been ongoing since 2016. We introduced the bursary for care-experienced students in 2017 and made it equivalent to the real Living Wage in 2018.

The latest figures show our universities are becoming more accessible to students from deprived areas, with a greater number of these students entering higher education. By 2030, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent 20% of entrants to higher education.

Part of helping people to enter and remain in further and higher education is the support provided to them. The bursary for care-experienced students is now £8,100 per year, as recommended by the independent Review of Student Support, and Scottish universities will offer guaranteed places to students who, at any point in their lives, have been in care and meet the minimum access requirements for the course.

This academic year will see increased bursary support for eligible students in both further and higher education and the higher education bursary threshold has increased from £19,000 to £21,000, meaning more students are able to access the highest level of support. The maximum repayment period for student loans has been reduced from 35 years to 30 years and, from April 2021, the repayment threshold will rise to £25,000.

The support we provide is not only financial. We are working with key partners to develop an integrated approach to student wellbeing in higher and further education, from day one of a student's studies to the day they graduate or receive their qualification. Alongside the actions colleges and universities themselves can take, we are working to support improved local partnerships between colleges and universities, NHS Scotland, Health and Social Care Partnerships, local authorities and the third sector, to support student's mental health needs.

This complements our work to provide more than 80 counsellors in further and higher education over the next four years. Funding for this will be available in this academic year, allowing the recruitment of appropriately qualified and registered counsellors to begin.

Scotland's universities and research institutes conduct world-leading research, making science and research one of Scotland's key strengths. This year we are investing £285 million in supporting university research and knowledge exchange.

We want Scottish businesses and public services to reap the benefits of this investment, so we are continuing to support the translation of research into inclusive economic growth in our national and regional economies. We also want colleges to continue to engage closely with businesses to make sure that the skills they need are available.

Over the coming year, we will respond to the recommendations of two independent reports on how our universities and colleges could further improve their engagement with businesses – from supporting collaboration between universities, colleges and businesses, to improving business performance through innovation and upskilling and reskilling the workforce.

Scottish colleges and universities have strong international links and a growing network of alumni all over the world. We will develop an Alumni Action Plan to harness the power of alumni to promote Scotland as a destination of choice for study and business and strengthen our global economic connections.



CULTURE, HERITAGE AND CREATIVITY

Culture is central to our wellbeing and our social, economic and environmental prosperity and we are working hard to make sure that everyone now and in the future is able to benefit from the cultural and creative experiences Scotland has to offer. We will continue our commitment to ensure free access to Scotland's national museums and galleries.

Our strong investment in Scotland's culture and heritage infrastructure supports new and enriching experiences. Last year, the new V&A Museum of Design opened, heralding an exciting new chapter for Dundee and for the future of design and innovation in Scotland.

Culture should be central to regeneration and this year we will proudly support the Paisley Museum project and its aims to develop a world-class museum at the heart of Paisley's town centre. The museum will continue to build on the momentum from the V&A Museum in Dundee by profiling Paisley's own unique design story, central to Scotland's society, culture and economy.



The UEFA European Championship Bill will prohibit ticket touting and protect commercial interests at the Euro 2020 football matches in Glasgow

This year, we continue to fund the redevelopment of the David Livingston Centre in Blantyre, the Burrell Collection in Glasgow and the new Great Tapestry of Scotland Visitor Centre in Galashiels, making art, history and heritage available across the country.

We will shortly publish a Culture Strategy for Scotland, following our national culture conversation and consultation, which received over 200 thoughtful responses. The strategy will highlight the intrinsic value and reach of culture and its transformational potential to contribute to individual, community and national wellbeing and prosperity.

Our libraries

Libraries do not just provide access to books – they play an essential role in our communities, improving attainment, supporting children and families in the early years, supporting digital inclusion and helping to tackle social isolation and loneliness.

Working with local authorities and the Scottish Library and Information Council, we will continue to support libraries through the Public Library Improvement Fund and working to make sure every child in Scotland is an active library member.



Major events and festivals

Sports, festivals and other events offer a chance for everyone in Scotland to participate in cultural activities, as well as giving us a chance to showcase ourselves to the world.

We will hold more world-class sporting events this year, welcoming the Solheim Cup, the biggest event in women's golf and one of the most prestigious in women's sport, to Gleneagles later this month.

In December, the European Short Course Swimming Championships will come to Glasgow and in June 2020 we will host a number of UEFA European Football Championship matches.

Hosting these events will enhance Scotland's reputation as a destination for major international events, promote Hampden as a leading venue and provide more opportunity for people in Scotland to experience world-class sport. We will introduce legislation to support the successful running of the Euro 2020 matches in Glasgow by prohibiting ticket touting and protecting commercial interests.

In the past year, we have won bids to host future editions of the Sprint World Orienteering Championships and the European Indoor Climbing Championships. The Island Games will be held in Orkney in 2023.

In 2023, we will host the inaugural Cycling World Championships, combining the world championships of 13 cycling disciplines and holding them concurrently in venues across Scotland. Welcoming another innovative event to Scotland confirms our position as a world leader in hosting bold new events. The World Championships will also be used as a catalyst to drive behavioural change in Scotland. It will provide a platform for wider benefits, such as those associated with active travel, healthier lifestyles and activity-based tourism. Our longer-term vision is that Scotland will truly become a Cycling Nation.

Scotland's festivals enhance our reputation as a welcoming, inclusive and creative country and contribute greatly to our culture, tourism and economy.

Since 2008 we have invested £25 million in the Scottish Government EXPO Fund to support our renowned Edinburgh festivals and we have expanded it to include Celtic Connections and Glasgow International. EXPO will continue to support leading projects which promote Scotland's creativity.

We will continue to fund Scotland's Winter Festivals. This includes our National Events programme which aims to engage up to 275,000 people at around 15 events across the country to celebrate St Andrew's Day, Hogmanay and Burns' Night.

In particular, we will build upon the success of the multi-cultural celebration of Scotland's Winter Festivals and the first edition of St Andrew's Fair Saturday in 2018, drawing upon our unique and diverse cultural heritage to showcase Scotland's values of fairness, kindness, inclusivity and internationalism on the world stage.

Last year's celebrations involved 26 cities and towns across 17 local authorities in Scotland, generating £38,682 to support 56 social causes. People from all over Scotland and the world experienced our vibrant culture.

This year's ambitious programme, to be held on 30 November, will show the value of cultural events beyond economic impact, boosting social inclusion, fairness and community engagement and showcase our collective values of fairness, inclusion and diversity.

Our national events strategy, Scotland: The Perfect Stage, launched in 2015 and runs until 2025. Now at the mid-point, this year we will review the strategy to ensure it continues to reflect our ambitions and priorities for Scotland's position on the global events stage.

This year, we will invest £150,000 as part of the International Creative Ambition Programme to strengthen Scotland's cultural links around the world. Supporting young artists to perform at major cultural gatherings will help them to build international connections, sharing cultural experiences, knowledge, skills and experiences to shape our understanding of the world.

Our National Performing Companies are the pride of Scotland and we will continue to support their significant contribution both at home and internationally as they showcase their talents on the world stage.

The Youth Music Initiative will continue its excellent work in supporting young musicians and ensure that our young people have the opportunity to experience music tuition by the time they leave primary school.



The creative economy

As well as being critical to wellbeing, culture plays an important part in our economy with creative industries employing around 77,000 people in Scotland.

Our screen sector is particularly vibrant. Public service broadcasters are increasing their presence in Scotland, with the new BBC Scotland channel and Channel 4's plans to open a creative hub in Glasgow by the end of this year.

Screen Scotland leads the growth of the screen sector through funding and support for film and television production, specialist staff and investment in skills, festivals, audiences and education.

Since Screen Scotland launched last summer, £4.9 million has been allocated to projects through the new Broadcast Content Fund, helping Scottish companies to grow and reach their ambitions in this sector. Over the past year, Screen Scotland has increased funding to a total of £2 million a year to attract inward investment to bring major productions to Scotland and we continue to work together to stimulate conditions for studio and infrastructure growth across Scotland. We will continue our work to support the creative industries.

Celebrating our heritage

We will continue to support and invest in the Gaelic and Scots languages, recognising them as an important part of our heritage and promoting the learning, speaking and use of these languages.

MG ALBA continues to produce high quality Gaelic programmes, working with a range of independent producers, making important contributions in media, arts, training, international co-productions, Gaelic learning and strengthening the economy in areas of low population.

Increased attendance at Fèisean, Royal National Mòd and Ceòlas show our work to increase the profile of Gaelic at home and abroad is successful.

As part of our support for the Scots language, the Scottish Government will ensure its Scots language policy and Action Plan is revised and relaunched this year. We have also worked with Creative Scotland on the forthcoming Scots Awards and Scots Language conference to mark the UNESCO year of indigenous languages in 2019.

We want to see more young people speaking and using Gaelic and our support for Gaelic extends to promoting the growth of Gaelic education at all levels. Funding will be maintained this year to continue our support to local authorities to provide delivery of Gaelic medium education from nursery provision to adult learning.

We are working with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to update their early years strategy to make sure that our expansion of early learning and childcare provision also supports parents who would like their children to learn in the medium of Gaelic.

There is growing demand from parents for Gaelic medium education and we are working with local authorities across Scotland on new Gaelic schools or units. The Govan Annex in Glasgow opened last month and work begins shortly on the Darroch Annex in Edinburgh, due to open in August next year.

As well as investing in physical Gaelic medium education infrastructure, we are also developing and expanding e-Sgoil which is now operating in 21 local authorities and supporting schools with the delivery of 25 subjects including Gaelic subjects.



Our historic environment

2020 marks the 700th anniversary of the 'signing' of the 1320 Declaration of Arbroath, considered by many as the first steps towards democracy as we know it today. With the support of the Scottish Government, National Records of Scotland and National Museum of Scotland are partnering to enable this rarely seen but iconic document to be on public display in Edinburgh from 27 March to 26 April 2020. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are also planning activities to mark the anniversary alongside the Arbroath 2020 festival, a six month long programme of related cultural and creative activity, launching in April 2020.

Our historic environment tells the story of our past and helps to shape our future. Last year, heritage tourism at HES sites contributed £620 million to Scotland's economy – HES welcomed over 5 million visitors to historic sites and supported more than 128,000 free education visits.

As well as helping more people to access sites, HES has now made more than half-a-million archival items available online, widening access to our history and heritage.

In 2018-19, HES invested £14.5 million in grants and launched the Historic Skills Investment Plan in partnership with Skills Development Scotland to address skills challenges and opportunities in the sector.

Its traditional skills programme is encouraging a greater understanding of traditional building materials and skills and it has increased the number of apprentices developing the skills needed to conserve and manage the historic environment into the future.

This year, HES will:

- implement an updated Climate Change and Environmental Action Plan to protect our historic properties
- work with Community Planning Partnerships to promote the role of the historic environment in place-making activities
- increase the contribution historic properties make to their local economies
- use the historic environment to support education and learning, ensuring that it is accessible to a diverse audience

Cultural and historical environment bodies, including HES, National Records of Scotland and National Library of Scotland, are also increasingly making archival material available on line and widening access to our history and heritage, with millions of items now accessible from anywhere around the world.

Funding our public services

These investments in our public services would not be possible without our approach to taxation. We have taken an approach to make tax fairer and more progressive to raise the additional revenue we need to protect our public services, tackle the effects of UK Government austerity and safeguard those on lower incomes.

Our approach to income tax means that the majority of people in Scotland pay less tax than elsewhere in the UK and those who can afford it pay proportionately more. Our reforms to residential Land and Building Transaction Tax (LBTT) mean that more than 80% of taxpayers have paid less tax compared to Stamp Duty Land Tax or no tax at all and our LBTT first-time buyer relief has helped over 10,000 buyers in the past year.

Our non-residential LBTT has the most competitive rates and bands in the UK for all commercial transactions, ensuring that Scotland is an attractive location for those wishing to buy or lease business premises.

We have introduced legislation to improve our non-domestic rates system to help businesses grow, encourage long-term investment and reflect changing marketplaces.

Our Non-Domestic Rates Bill sets out the move to a three-year valuation cycle as well as how we will ensure a level playing field by reforming a number of reliefs and tackling known avoidance measures. We will also devolve empty property relief to local authorities in time for the next revaluation in April 2022.

We supported amendments to the Transport Bill at stage two which will provide local authorities with the discretionary power to apply a workplace parking levy. As well as helping local authorities to address local transport needs, it is a tool that could be used to help achieve our ambitions to tackle climate change.

We will shortly begin a consultation on the principles of a locally-determined transient visitor levy, prior to introducing legislation next year. This will give local authorities the power to choose to apply a levy if appropriate for their local circumstances, providing a means of responding to some of the local pressures tourism may bring whilst also allowing local tourism offers to be enhanced.

We will also continue to hold talks with other parties to identify a replacement for Council Tax that could be supported by the Scottish Parliament. Should cross-party agreement be reached, we will prepare the necessary legislation to implement the reforms agreed before the end of the next Parliament.

We are taking a path for tax that works for Scotland. Had we followed UK Government's approach to income tax, analysis shows we would have £500 million less to spend this year on improving the quality of life of people across Scotland.

Investing in our workforce

Essential to making sure our public services are fit-for-purpose and deliver for the people of Scotland is a strong workforce.

This year, we continued our commitment to implement a progressive pay policy across public bodies where Scottish Ministers' pay policy applies. Multi-year pay awards have also been agreed, providing added certainty for many of the 470,000 people in our wider public sector workforces, including police officers, those working in our NHS, local government and those teaching in our schools and colleges.

This continuing recognition of the important contribution of our hard-working public sector employees also maintains our commitment to the real Living Wage, helps to reduce overall income inequality and provides a direct boost to household incomes.

This year we will continue to focus on ensuring our public sector pay policy strengthens public services, supports our public sector workforce and is affordable. We will announce our detailed plans later this year in the context of the Scottish Budget.

Working across the public sector

Our commitment to improving the lives of people across Scotland is rooted in the quality and strength of our partnerships and relationships with all those who shape and deliver, high quality public services.

Over the coming year, we will build on our collective achievements and reinforce the critical partnerships between national and local government, the third sector and the many public sector bodies that all have a part to play in improving the wellbeing of our people and communities.

These partnerships are crucial as we continue our work to:

- improve health and deliver better social care
- build inclusive, empowered and resilient communities
- improve skills and educational outcomes
- deliver Fair Work
- tackle poverty
- transform local democracy and accountability
- continue to prepare for the risks of EU Exit
- take action to respond to the global climate emergency

Open government

Scotland works with over 90 other governments across the world to improve the openness and transparency of what we do and improve citizen participation in our work.

Our second Open Government action plan, co-created with third-sector organisations and people across Scotland, was published this year. It will run to 2020 and has a broader scope than before, including local government, scrutiny bodies and regulators.

This work will make sure that those driving reform of our public services and those delivering them have the skills, tools and ways of working with people across Scotland so that they can see, understand and influence the decisions that affect them.

We have brought forward legislation to extend coverage of freedom of information to registered social landlords and their subsidiaries from November this year and we are consulting on further extension in autumn 2019.

We have made significant improvements in how we respond to Freedom of Information Requests. Our performance is holding steady, but we are just short of the 95% target and aim to make further improvements this year.

Wellbeing governments

We hosted the Wellbeing Governments Group in Edinburgh this year. Working with Iceland and New Zealand, the other founding members, we will share expertise and transferable policy practice to help us drive improvements in wellbeing through our economic approach.



We will hold further events in the coming year, including hosting an international business-led summit to promote best practice on how business can help us work towards a wellbeing economy through sustainable growth, inclusion and protecting our environment.



Chapter 4

COMMUNITIES WHERE EVERYONE IS VALUED, PROTECTED AND RESPECTED



Services that treat people with dignity and respect are at the core of our ambition for Scotland and tackling inequality across our communities is essential to improving everyone's wellbeing.

Scotland's *National Performance Framework* explicitly recognises the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil international human rights – doing so is a crucial part of making Scotland a fairer and more equal society where everyone is valued, protected and respected.

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

Being safe and protected in our communities is essential to everyone's wellbeing and to ensuring that their rights are respected.

Police

We have committed to protect the police revenue budget for the lifetime of the Parliament. We are providing a further £29 million this year, supporting Police Scotland in the implementation of its 10-year policing strategy.

This is supporting a technology-enabled transformation of the service, making sure that it is fit for the 21st century. Police officers are receiving new mobile devices, allowing them to spend more time in the communities they serve, rather than being tied to police stations, and a single national computer network will improve performance across the country. Police Scotland is trialing a new Contact Assessment Model which will improve the response to those calling the service.

This year, we are consulting on the future strategic priorities which Ministers set for Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. As part of that, we will be considering the sustainability of policing in Scotland.

We introduced the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Bill to Parliament this year, which will help to ensure effective, ethical and proportionate practices in the use of biometric data for policing purposes, keeping communities safe whilst respecting the rights of the individual and improving the accountability of the police. We expect the Bill to complete its passage in Parliament next year, after which Parliament will appoint a Biometrics Commissioner.

Extending this work, we will establish an independently-chaired group to ensure that police powers allow for the use of technology to make policing more effective and efficient, as well as ensuring that these powers are used proportionately and ethically.

Making sure that police complaints and misconduct investigation processes are the best they can be is an essential part of a modern and transparent justice system. An independent review led by Rt Hon. Dame Elish Angiolini DBE QC has published its preliminary report and we will be considering, with partners, options to take forward the recommendations. We have also appointed the new Police Investigations and Review Commissioner.

Putting victims at the centre

We will continue our major reforms of our justice system, making sure it is accessible to those who need it and focusing on improving support for victims of crime. Our goal is to put victims at the heart of our justice system, making sure that their voices are heard and their journey through the system is as streamlined as it can be.

In the past year, we have established the Victims Taskforce and, with the support of Victim Support Scotland in partnership with criminal justice agencies and third sector support agencies, we are working to make sure our justice system is more victim-centred.

The Taskforce will be directly informed by a Victims Sounding Board and victim reference groups. These are made up of victims and their families, allowing them to voice their experiences and influence the work of the Taskforce.

This will build on the new Service for Families Bereaved by Crime, which provides dedicated and continuous support to families bereaved by murder and culpable homicide.

Improvements to how victims experience prison and parole processes are already in train too. Under the Victim Notification Scheme, victims of life sentenced offenders are now given the opportunity to make representations in person ahead of decisions about temporary release and we have consulted on further opportunities for victims to describe their experience in the way which works best for them within the parole process.

We are consulting on expanding the range of serious crimes where victims can make a statement to the court and we will introduce legislation so victims can set out to the court how an offence has impacted on them physically, emotionally and financially.

Our work over the coming year includes:

- carrying out work to better understand where the gaps are in how we support victims or witnesses involved in the criminal justice system
- making sure that wherever victims come into contact with the justice system, from early engagements with police to attendance at court and beyond, a trauma-informed approach is taken
- considering the outcome of Lady Dorrian's review of the management of sexual offences and how these can be better conducted through the courts
- developing a sexual offences and gender-based violence work stream under the Victims Taskforce, taking into account the remit of Lady Dorrian's review
- rolling out a statutory appropriate adults service, backed by £1 million of new investment, to provide communication support to vulnerable adults during police procedures

- investing in the upgrade of facilities for child witnesses to give pre-recorded evidence, including a new facility in Glasgow launching in the autumn
- beginning the first phase of implementation of the pre-recorded reforms in the Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) (Scotland) Act, starting with child witnesses in certain High Court proceedings
- developing Scottish standards for the Barnahus concept, publishing draft standards for consultation at the end of this year and finalised standards in 2020
- progressing our Restorative Justice Action Plan, providing voluntary, safe communication between victims and those who have harmed them, helping victims to move on while seeing perpetrators face the consequences of their actions. This work, backed by £300,000 of new investment, will help to reduce victims' fear of further victimisation and have a positive impact on reducing reoffending. We will map existing provision of restorative justice services, provide training and increase both public awareness and the availability and consistency of services across Scotland by 2023

Overseen by the Victims Taskforce, we will:

- carry out a systematic review of all publications, whether hard copy, online or in official correspondence, to make sure that they are victim-centred, consistent, up-to-date and use clear and compassionate language
- review the process used to develop and publish the criminal justice bodies' annual standards of service for victims and witnesses so that victim support organisations are more directly involved
- improve the information available, reviewing how data is shared between different organisations victims come into contact with and exploring the use of digital tools to support victims

Access to justice

Mediation is an often underused means of resolving disputes within our civil justice system. It has potential benefits such as providing a low cost or free service to the majority of litigants, creating opportunities for cases to move faster and more efficiently to a resolution and reducing the inequality of access to the civil justice system due to the high costs of litigation. We will respond to the report of the Expert Group on Mediation by the end of this year.

Legal aid is a fundamental part of our justice system and we must make sure it can be accessed by those who need it. We have uplifted all legal aid fees by 3% since the independent review *Rethinking Legal Aid*, making Scotland's legal aid spend per head among the highest in the European Union and with the widest scope and eligibility.

We want to make sure the legal aid system is user-focused, flexible and valued as a public service and so we are consulting on further improvements, including how we might use targeted interventions to remove the barriers some people face in accessing legal aid, including in cases of domestic abuse. This work has been informed by the recommendations of the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls.

We will set out our plans by the end of this year and launch a consultation on reforming our legal services early in 2020.

We are developing new technology to transform how the justice system operates – from police mobile devices to improved facilities for pre-recording evidence – making our justice system as efficient as possible and improving the experience of those involved in it.

This year, we will develop new procedures and policies for the collection and sharing of digital evidence across the justice system and will pilot this new technology next year.

We will publish the independent Jury Research report and carry out engagement on what these findings may mean for future criminal justice reforms.

Transforming custody, rehabilitation and community interventions

We will continue our work to modernise our prison service.

Recognising the Scottish Prison Service's role in our justice system, we are continuing to invest in our prison estate. This includes progressing work to replace HMP Barlinnie, Scotland's largest prison, and continuing to progress a new model for the female custodial estate, with intensive support services to help women to overcome issues such as alcohol, drugs, mental health issues and domestic abuse trauma.

The first two community custody units will open by the end of 2021, providing levels of security which are proportionate with the level of risk posed by the majority of female offenders and will allow women in custody to be closer to their communities. Construction of the new Women's National Facility is scheduled to begin early in 2020.

We continue to support the 12 Prison Visitor Centres, providing support to families with relatives in prison – particularly for children affected by parental imprisonment as part of our work to tackle ACEs. Services run by our third sector partners help families deal with the issues they face as a result of imprisonment and give them an important source of advice, information and support.

Our focus on prevention, early intervention and effective community interventions has helped achieve a 20-year low in reconviction rates.

We are progressing action to tackle Scotland's internationally high rate of imprisonment – the highest in Western Europe. The evidence tells us that community sentences are more effective than short-term custodial sentences – people released from prison after a sentence of 12 months or less are twice as likely to be convicted again than those who have served a Community Payback Order.

While sentencing decisions are a matter for the independent judiciary, we have extended the presumption against short sentences to 12 months or less. Our aim is to reduce disruptive and counter-productive short-term prison sentences which often lead to homelessness, unemployment and family breakdown.

The extension to the presumption came into force this summer but first we made sure that additional safeguards were put in place for victims of domestic abuse.

We will protect £100 million of funding this year for Justice Social Work, investing £9.5 million a year more than in 2015-16 on community justice services such as community sentences and electronic monitoring. We will monitor the impact of the presumption and other factors closely, including the availability of community sentences relative to demand.

We recognise that remand can be as disruptive to employment, housing and family relationships as short-term prison sentences.

We have issued updated guidance on Bail Supervision and made additional funding available. We will look more widely at how bail law operates and at access to support and mentoring schemes in the community to make sure that it is only used when it is needed to protect the public.

We will commence parts of the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019 that strengthen the Home Detention Curfew regime in Scotland. It will introduce a new offence of remaining unlawfully at large, create new powers of recall for the prison service and give the police greater powers to apprehend anyone who absconds.

The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019 also modernises the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 allowing people to move on from their offending and improve their opportunities for gaining employment and training, reducing their likelihood of reoffending and enabling people to contribute positively to society.

Our work to increase access to and improve confidence in alternatives to short-term prison sentences is an important part of the solution. But there are long-term drivers within our justice and penal system, such as online offending, impacts of trauma and severe and multiple disadvantage in our communities, which need to be addressed too.

This year, we will work with justice agencies, local government, the third sector and others to identify and further progress the whole system changes we need to make to respond to Scotland's internationally high rate of imprisonment.

Our approach will be informed by public health responses to issues such as the misuse of drugs and the impact of adversity, trauma and multiple disadvantage. We will set out a long-term vision for our justice system and how we respond to the changing nature of offending in ways which are proportionate, just, effective and promote rehabilitation, as well as keeping our communities safe and responding to the needs of victims.



The Defamation and Malicious Publication Bill will ensure that a more appropriate balance is struck between protecting reputation and freedom of expression

Cashback for communities

Since 2008, nearly £110 million has been committed for investment back into communities as a result of seizing proceeds of crime. This autumn, we will announce the projects and partners for phase 5 of the Cashback for Communities programme which will launch next spring. It will make up to £18 million available over three years to expand young people's horizons and increase the opportunities they have to develop their interests and skills and support them into positive destinations.



Modernising our laws and learning from the past

New legislation for drug-driving limits will come into force in October this year. The new law covers 17 different drug types and means that Scotland is leading the way in creating safer roads with drug-driving limits in place, as well as having a lower drink-drive limit than the rest of the UK.

A number of our other laws need to be updated to reflect life in modern day Scotland.

We will introduce the Defamation and Malicious Publication Bill to Parliament this year, which will simplify and modernise the law and provide a clear framework which balances freedom of expression and protection of individuals' reputations.

We have consulted on the laws of succession and are currently consulting on the rules for judicial factors. We will respond to the results of both consultations by spring next year.

We will also carry out some focused consultation on aspects of the Scottish Law Commission's Report on Moveable Transactions, the recommendations of which we are currently considering.

As well as looking to the future, there are important events from the past which we need to learn lessons from. The independent review of the impact of policing during the Miners' Strike will publish its final report in the autumn and we will consider its findings and any appropriate actions.

A justice system which better reflects our communities

This year marks 100 years of women in the legal profession in Scotland. Whilst progress has been made, there is broad agreement that more needs to be done to ensure that the legal profession reflects the society that it serves and to tackle gender disparity and the gender pay gap. We will work with the legal profession to encourage further improvements, including, for example, emphasising zero tolerance of bullying and harassment and expanding family-friendly policies.

There are also too few women and people from minority ethnic communities in senior positions in the legal profession. We will work with key stakeholders to understand what further action can be taken to remove real or perceived barriers that might be preventing talented legal professionals from reaching senior positions, including applying for judicial office.

Fire and rescue

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service continues to deliver emergency and prevention services across our communities as well as taking important steps to modernise and transform.

Thirty-eight new rapid response vehicles and 18 new whole-time staff are now available in rural areas of Scotland, with a further 42 staff to be appointed over the next two years. The Youth Engagement Scheme will launch this year, preparing young people with important opportunities such as first aid training to develop their skills and confidence.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service conducted 69,000 home fire safety visits last year. The Safe and Well project will help to reduce injuries from unintentional harm by incorporating wider health and social care considerations and improving referral pathways with other services. It will increase the number of vulnerable people across Scotland getting support to maintain their personal resilience, independence and quality of life.

As well as contributing to the wellbeing of our communities, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is taking action to tackle climate change.

To ensure the Service plays its part in reducing emissions, it will increase its charging network to include a further 23 locations, receive delivery of 45 ultra-low emission cars later this month and introduce a replacement van fleet of 20 small- and medium-sized vans.

Across the UK, lessons have been learned as a result of the terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

In Scotland, we have reviewed fire safety regimes in high-rise domestic buildings. While no major gaps in our legislation were identified, we will take action in a number of key areas to protect our communities living in these buildings. We will:

- develop specific fire safety guidance aimed at all residents of high-rise domestic buildings

- introduce Scottish guidance on fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats, guidance on fire safety in specialised housing and guidance on fire risk assessments
- put in place more stringent fire safety provisions for external wall cladding systems
- take a consistent position on the storage, removal and enforced prohibition of combustible materials in common areas
- publish new regulations for automatic fire suppression systems in all new flats and some houses in multiple occupancy by October next year
- launch a fire safety campaign for common areas

Making sure our buildings are safe from fire and are of the highest standards is essential. In the past year, we have implemented the recommendations of two Scottish Building Standards system reviews, developing new guidance and establishing the Future Boards Programme to take forward a package of measures, including making sure we have a high quality workforce and taking steps to improve compliance with standards.

Following a national consultation earlier this year that attracted over 16,300 responses, we will take forward work with partners including the emergency services, local authorities, animal welfare organisations, the firework industry and communities to explore ways to reduce the negative impact fireworks can have.

Security

We continue our work with partners to ensure Scotland is a safe place to live and work. We continuously improve our national security based on Chilcot principles and work with UK Government to make sure that delivery of the UK Counter-Terrorism Strategy, CONTEST, continues to fit the Scottish approach and environment. As part of this approach, we will continue to take a balanced, proportionate and preventative approach to tackling radicalisation.

Over the past year, we have worked with authorities across Scotland to raise awareness and improve knowledge of this issue, as well as providing resources and self-assessment tools for local government, further education colleges and universities.

We will continue that work this coming year, including making a new resource about online radicalism available to schools, and introducing consistency to the Prevent Professional Concerns multi-agency process.



The Hate Crime Bill will make hate crime legislation fit for 21st-century Scotland

PROTECTING RIGHTS

Hate crime has no place in Scottish society. We have been taking forward work to consolidate and update laws on hate crime, consulting widely with key stakeholders and with the public. We have published our analysis of that consultation and will introduce a Bill, making hate crime legislation fit for 21st-century Scotland.

As well as introducing legislation, we will encourage reporting by launching a hate crime campaign to challenge the prejudice and attitudes that fuel intolerance. Having already adopted a definition for anti-Semitism, we will consult on adopting a definition of Islamophobia. We will also explore what more can be done to ensure the safety and security of places of worship.

Human rights

The First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership presented its recommendations at the end of 2018. We have now established a National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership which will work to ensure Scotland is a world leader in putting human rights into practice.

It will focus on the development of a new statutory framework which will help to safeguard the human rights of everyone in Scotland. It will drive work to give practical effect to the protections provided by other treaties and obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and bringing them into domestic law. The Taskforce will report on its work in 2021.

Human trafficking and exploitation

Human trafficking is a hidden crime and its true scale is unknown. Victims may be frightened or unable to ask for help due to fear of their traffickers, distrust in the authorities and a lack of awareness that there are agencies that can support them to safety and recovery.

We are consulting this year on creating a statutory 'duty to notify' – a legal duty on specified Scottish public authorities to notify Police Scotland about suspected human trafficking and exploitation victims.

This duty will give a more accurate picture of the scale and extent of this crime in Scotland and help agencies and services to target their enforcement activity and support services.

We will also review the Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy and, together, this work will help to improve how we identify and support victims, identify perpetrators and disrupt their activity and address conditions in our communities that foster trafficking and exploitation.

Democratic rights

We want to increase democratic participation in Scotland and encourage more people to use their vote and stand for election.

We have led the way internationally by lowering the voting age in local and Scottish Parliament elections to age 16.

We have introduced legislation to strengthen democratic engagement.

The Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Bill proposes that everyone who has a legal right to live here, including foreign nationals, should have the right to vote in Scottish Parliament and local government elections. Giving fair access to voting rights shows that we value equally all those who choose to make Scotland their home. It is also proposed that prisoners serving 12 months or less will be allowed to register and vote, ensuring that we are compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill will also deliver improvements for voters. We have introduced a provision to enable the Scottish Parliament to debate and decide on whether we should move to five-year terms for the Scottish Parliament and for local government. Among other improvements to electoral administration, it is proposed to give greater scope to take into account community ties and local geography when ward boundaries are reviewed.

These changes to modernise our electoral system and widen who takes part in it will be ready in time for the new Scottish Parliament election in 2021 and local government elections in 2022.

Children and young people's rights

We have taken the decision to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots Law, the only country in the UK to do so. We are consulting on the best method to use to do this and will report on our findings in the coming months, delivering legislation by the end of this parliamentary session.

While that process is ongoing, our commitment to ensuring children's rights continues.

We have supported the removal of the existing defence which allows parents to physically punish their children and, to make sure children's voices are heard clearly in family law cases, we are bringing forward a new Children Bill.

We have raised the age of criminal responsibility to 12 years old, leading the way in the UK to make sure that no child under 12 will accrue a criminal record.

This year, as we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we will step up our awareness-raising programme for children's rights. We will:

- work in partnership with children, young people and wider stakeholders to co-produce materials that highlight how children's rights benefit us all
- refresh the 'Introduction to children's rights' e-learning tool
- promote the use of Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessments by public bodies and third sector organisations

Making sure young people's voices are heard and providing space for young people to challenge how we think about different generations is essential to making Scotland a place where everyone grows up respected.

Our 2018 Year of Young People saw young people engage in how we make policy, ensuring that government decisions take into account what matters for them – over 750,000 young people attended a related event last year.

We will continue to listen to young people's views, making sure they can contribute to our society and help us to build inclusive and strong communities.



Making Scotland an equal and connected place

Many people in Scotland are living longer, healthier lives, which is a huge achievement.

However, older people can be marginalised and our *Older People's Framework*, published this year, sets out how we will remove barriers, tackle inequalities and ensure older people can flourish, as well as making sure that our communities benefit from the contributions older people can make. This year, we will:

- develop a strategy to combat negative perceptions of older people and work with others, including the media, to tackle ageism
- review guidance on housing adaptations
- improve provision of and access to mental health services, including psychological therapy for people over the age of 65
- increase digital inclusion of older people

Social isolation and loneliness can affect people of all ages and stages of life. It can have a significant impact on a person's physical and mental wellbeing and is a major public health issue.

Last year, we published our first strategy to tackle social isolation and loneliness, and build stronger social connections across our communities. We have established a National Implementation Group to help us take action and will publish a delivery plan setting out how we will deliver better outcomes across our communities.

This year we will invest £80,000 to support the befriending sector, ensuring more people can benefit from this vital lifeline.



The Civil Partnership Bill will make civil partnerships available to mixed sex couples

Civil partnerships

Last year, the UK Supreme Court ruled in a case brought in England and Wales that preventing mixed sex couples from entering into civil partnerships is not compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) on equality grounds.

We consulted on the future of civil partnership in Scotland and, following careful consideration of responses, we will introduce legislation to make civil partnerships available to mixed sex couples.

Equality for women and girls

We are proud of the progress we have made on equality in Scotland, but there is still work to do.

We were the first government in the world to fund access to free sanitary products across our schools, colleges and universities and across wider communities, increasingly to those on low incomes.

We are providing up to £8.8 million to continue to make sanitary products available in a wide range of places. Our partnership approach has given organisations the chance to shape delivery in line with local need. It is already embedding into society and making a difference to people's lives. We need to go further and will launch a media campaign to challenge the stigma around menstruation and sanitary products.

We also continue to tackle the causes of inequality women face in the workplace, including with our work on addressing the gender pay gap.

Last year, our Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 set a statutory objective for equal representation of women on public sector non-executive boards by 2022.

This year, we reached a milestone with women accounting for half of all board members appointed to public bodies across Scotland. This is a significant step and this year we will continue our work to make sure there is equal representation on every individual board.

We want to make sure that we do everything we can to tackle the root causes of inequality for women and girls.

The National Advisory Council on Women and Girls published its first report at the beginning of this year and we will be taking forward action based on their recommendations, learning from best practice in Scotland and around the world to make sure everyone is treated fairly and can achieve their full potential.

Over the coming year, we will:

- create a What Works? Institute to identify, test and promote best practice in changing public attitudes to and challenging stereotypes about women and girls' equality and rights – we will work with partners to develop a framework for the Institute and its work by summer next year
- establish a Gender Beacon Collaborative to promote gender equality across Scottish public life – membership and ambitions for the collaborative will be announced later this year
- fund a post in Gender Equal Media Scotland to increase its impact, engagement and visibility amongst industry and other stakeholders
- establish a short-life taskforce to look at gender inequality in education and how we can take additional, better connected and bolder action to embed gender equality within early years and school education
- hold an international event with the Open Government Partnership, academics, civil society groups, public servants and representation from the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls to look at how to address inequality and co-design gender equity measures
- continue to lobby the UK Government to improve parental leave
- support work to encourage 50/50 representation at elections

Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is a breach of human rights. It is unacceptable in any society – everyone has the right to live free from the threat of violence and abuse.

We have committed to ending it for good and our actions are focused on properly securing the rights of women and girls.

We are guided by our commitment to the *UN Sustainable Development Goals* and *The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*.

We will continue our work to prevent gender-based violence, tackling the societal conditions that allow it to happen. We will make sure that our justice, health and education systems are set up to address it and we will continue to provide the right support at the earliest point to women and children who are experiencing abuse.

Importantly, too, we will hold the perpetrators of gender-based violence to account.

Working with COSLA and other partners, we have made significant progress already and we will redouble our efforts over the coming year.

Equally Safe Priority 1 – Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls

Working with schools, colleges and universities, we have supported work to promote respectful, responsible and confident relationships amongst young people as well as providing a safe environment for students and staff.

This includes providing over £590,000 of additional funding to Rape Crisis Scotland to extend their schools education programme, with 26,000 young people benefiting. We have supported universities and colleges to adopt the Equally Safe Tool Kit.

We will develop national guidance for schools which will set out the range of support and practical prevention and intervention measures available which can be used to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children and young people.

We are also taking action across society. We are committed to a major national campaign on sexual harassment and sexism and this is now in an advanced planning stage while our employer accreditation programme is being piloted in seven council areas across the country.

Equally Safe Priority 2 – women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically and politically

Violence against women and girls is a result of women's and girl's status in society, and so we need to eliminate the gender inequality that lies at its root. We are taking broad action to advance women and girls' equality, including:

- promoting gender equal pay, supported by the real Living Wage
- improving women's health outcomes, including providing mental health support for all women during pregnancy and after giving birth
- increasing access to period products
- expanding entitlement to funded early learning and childcare and piloting approaches to flexible and affordable community-based out-of-school care

Our work to respond to the recommendations of the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls is an important part of our efforts to make sure women and girls grow up and live in a country which allows them to achieve their full potential.

Equally Safe Priority 3 – interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women, children and young people

Following the introduction of the Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) Bill earlier this year, we held a national summit to explore what further action is needed to tackle female genital mutilation. We will take this work forward this year, as well as refresh our guidance on forced marriage.

This year we will continue to improve the experience of rape and sexual assault victims in our health and justice systems by:

- introducing the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) Bill. This will improve the way in which forensic medical examinations and associated healthcare are conducted, taking a trauma-informed approach and introducing a self-referral model for victims of sexual crime who wish to have a forensic medical examination without first reporting a crime to the police
- supporting the development of the Equally Safe Multi-Agency Centre in Edinburgh which will bring experts from child and adult protection, healthcare, police and social work together under one roof to provide age-appropriate, wrap-around care for children, young people and adults who have been victims of sexual assault and other forms of abuse and neglect

- supporting a pilot to visually record rape complainers' initial statements to police to be used as evidence later in a trial, with the aim of reducing the need for them to recount their ordeal again in court
- considering the outcome of Lady Dorrian's review of the management of sexual offences and how they can be better conducted through the courts
- supporting the development of trauma training packages for justice organisations who come into contact with victims
- engaging with Rape Crisis Scotland's Survivors Reference Group to make sure our work continues to be informed by the experience of survivors

Equally Safe Priority 4 – men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 came into effect in April this year, creating a specific offence of domestic abuse covering not only physical abuse but other forms of psychological abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour.

Its introduction has been supported by a national public awareness campaign and training for police officers, members of the judiciary and prosecutors.

We will continue to work with those in housing, social work, health and schools to ensure that professionals have resources available to them to support a shared understanding of domestic abuse.

We will promote the principles of the Safe and Together model™ which seeks to keep children who have experienced domestic violence safe and together with their non-abusive parent, while supporting and acknowledging non-abusive parents' protective efforts and ensuring perpetrators are held accountable for their abuse.

We have supported the roll out of the Caledonian Programme to an additional six local authorities with an additional £2.8 million, meaning more male perpetrators will receive the right rehabilitation services to address the issues giving rise to their offending behaviour.

This year we will explore policy options to increase access to positive behaviour change programmes for domestically abusive men.

We are committed to exploring what more can be done to address prostitution in Scotland, recognising it as a form of violence against women.

We will consult on approaches to challenge men's demand for prostitution, continue to support work to reduce the harms associated with commercial sexual exploitation and help women to exit prostitution.

This year, we will consult on a statutory 'duty to notify' when public authorities suspect human trafficking or exploitation is happening.



The Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) Bill will improve the way in which forensic medical examinations and associated healthcare are conducted

LGBTI equality

We continue to advance Scotland's reputation as one of the most progressive countries in Europe for LGBTI equality.

Were Scotland able to be rated as a single entry in the ILGA Europe Rainbow Index, we would be the third most progressive country in Europe and we are working hard to make even more progress.

The Historical Sexual Offences (Pardons and Disregards) Act 2018 was passed by Parliament last year, righting years of injustices suffered by people across Scotland. Next month, when the legislation is implemented, all men convicted of historical same sex sexual offences will receive an automatic pardon under the new law and be able to apply to have the offence disregarded so it will never show up on any form of disclosure or criminal records check.



We will continue to invest significant funding in crucial LGBTI work, with over £1 million in the next year supporting work on raising awareness, supporting LGBTI adults and young people and tackling the inequalities they experience.

But there is more to do to create a society where no one suffers hate, fear or discrimination simply because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Bold recommendations to embed LGBTI inclusive education within our school curriculum are being implemented and changes will be made to our Census processes, where optional questions on transgender status and history, as well as sexual orientation, will be asked on a voluntary basis for the first time.

The Census (Amendment) (Scotland) Act 2019 makes clear that there will be no penalty for not answering these questions but we hope that this change will improve our understanding of communities across Scotland and ensure our work is designed in ways which works best for our diverse population.

We will publish a draft Gender Recognition Bill by the end of this year, setting out our proposals to reform the current process of obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate and how we will bring Scotland in line with international best practice. An Equality Impact Assessment will be published alongside the Bill and seek to address concerns which have been raised. We will hold a full public consultation on the detail of the Bill.

This year, we will:

- continue to challenge transphobia
- develop guidance for Scottish Government and the wider public sector on balancing trans rights and the rights of women, within the overall context of our clear commitment to promoting trans inclusion
- establish a working group to consider steps to improve the lives of non-binary people
- establish a working group to make recommendations on the collection and disaggregation of data in relation to sex, gender and gender identity
- consider how best to improve the health and wellbeing of trans people, and ensure that children and young people exploring their gender identity have access to the right support
- produce updated guidance for schools to help them to support transgender pupils, within the current legal framework, by the end of this year

All of this work is grounded in the firm belief that we will continue to protect and promote the rights of women and of trans men and women.

Race equality

Supported by our commitment to the *International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination*, our Race Equality Action Plan sets out our work to remove barriers and create equal opportunities for everyone in Scotland, regardless of their race.

We held our first Race Equality Conference in December, which focused on how we can take action to improve employment outcomes for people from minority ethnic communities and we will hold the second conference in early 2020.

We have taken action to improve the wellbeing and protect the human rights of Gypsy/Traveller families in Scotland. Across our work, the voice of this community is being heard and having a say in the issues that affect them. We have funded a new Gypsy/Traveller Women's Voices Project, provided practical and financial support to enable young people to work with us and have provided significant additional funding to improve the delivery of education to Gypsy/Traveller communities.

We are taking this important work forward this year, publishing our joint Action Plan with COSLA this autumn. It will set out how we will tackle racism and discrimination towards Gypsy/Travellers, increase representation in public life and decision-making in communities and improve the wellbeing and outcomes for Gypsy/Travellers. The Plan will also set out how we will deliver more culturally-appropriate and better accommodation, including a £2 million additional investment in public sector Gypsy/Traveller sites, designed to improve quality of life.

Caring for our veterans

Scotland recognises the value that members of the armed forces, veterans and their families bring to our communities and society.

We are working to ensure that ex-servicemen and women receive the support and advice they need to transition from military to civilian life. We will continue our work to take forward the recommendations of the Veterans Commissioner and we will publish an implementation plan for the Strategy for our Veterans by the end of this year.

Since 2008, we have invested over £1.4 million in over 150 projects to support veterans and will continue that support this year with projects across Scotland aiming to combat loneliness and social isolation, support improved employment outcomes and provide wider support.

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

We are taking action to build a fairer and more equal country, tackling poverty and inequality to make sure everyone in Scotland has equal opportunities, all children and young people can realise their aspirations and all those who need support can get it.

We are making sure that the voices of those who experience poverty are heard and we will speak up for those who are not being listened to or who are disempowered.

We have set ourselves ambitious targets to reduce child poverty and are working hard to boost incomes and reduce household costs for those who need it most.

Next year we will continue to invest £100 million to protect people from the worst of UK Government welfare cuts. This is part of our wider investment in support for low-income households. An initial assessment, published in the *Tackling Child Poverty Progress Report*, suggests that the Scottish Government invested over £1.4 billion in these households in 2018-19.

Our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, backed by £351 million in 2019-20, benefits almost half-a-million households and saves recipients an average of £701 per year.

Our Money Talk Team service, supported by £3.3 million to 2020, provides older people and low-income families with help to maximise their incomes by claiming the benefits and other support they are entitled to. We will continue to fund these essential services in the coming year.

The majority of families living in poverty include an adult in work. Our Fair Work agenda and our efforts to increase the number of people receiving the real Living Wage is helping to lift these families out of poverty and improve the life chances of their children.

Food insecurity

We know that too many people struggle with the cost of food and our commitment to the *UN Sustainable Development Goals* means that our goal is for zero hunger in Scotland.

This year we have delivered the new Best Start Food scheme to support families on low incomes to access healthy and nutritious food. The introduction of the Best Start Foods payment card could enable a family on low-income benefits to receive up to £1,054 over the course of Best Start Foods entitlement for children up to 3 years of age.

Our £3.5 million Fair Food Fund is in place and has already helped community organisations to provide more dignified responses to food insecurity. We also recognise the extra pressure on family finances during school holidays, when support like Free School Meals is not available. The Fair Food Fund has ensured that over 60,000 young people were able to access fun activities and nutritious food in the holidays this year, through a range of third sector and local authority projects such as the innovative Highland Holiday Hub. We will continue to support holiday projects and use the learning from the investment in our developing policy for out-of-school care.

Social security

UK Government welfare cuts have increased the risk of deprivation and hardship for low-income families across Scotland.

Our new agency Social Security Scotland has now been up and running for a year, providing over 91,000 people with £190 million in vital support for 2018-19, increasing to over £350 million for 2019-20.

This essential public service is guided by our core values of fairness, dignity and respect. These are embodied in the Social Security Charter which was co-developed with people with lived experience of social security systems and was unanimously approved by Parliament this year. It sets out how the agency will deliver for the people of Scotland and how it will protect and realise people's rights.



Now that the Charter is in place, we will work with people who have experience of the benefits system to co-develop a new framework for how we measure people's experiences of Social Security Scotland and will publish it next month.

In the past year, we have also established the Scottish Commission on Social Security, which provides independent scrutiny of our social security system and holds us to account. We have worked with the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service to establish the Social Security Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal for Scotland – a body independent from Scottish Government which hears appeals against decisions made by our agency.

We are now delivering five payments to people in Scotland – the three Best Start Grant payments, Best Start Foods and the Carer's Allowance Supplement.

Carer's Allowance Supplement is a new benefit which addresses the injustice that Carer's Allowance is the lowest of all working age benefits. Our supplement means that the support received by carers is now higher than that provided by Jobseeker's Allowance recognising the contribution carers make to society and showing that we greatly value the role that they play. This year's recipients of Carer's Allowance will receive £452.40 more than equivalent carers in the rest of the UK. In total, our investment through Carer's Allowance and the Supplement is over £320 million in 2019-20.

Our Best Start Grant payments provide parents and carers on certain benefits and tax credits with financial support during the early years of a child's life. This is £600 during pregnancy or after birth for a first child and £300 for any siblings thereafter, with £250 at around the time a child starts nursery and another £250 when they reach school age. In the first seven months, we have made more than 42,000 Best Start Grant payments, putting £12.9 million in the pockets of low-income families.

Best Start Foods, providing low-income pregnant women and families with help to buy healthy food, launched this summer and we will provide £6 million of funding for it in 2020-21.

Best Start Foods replaces the UK Healthy Start Voucher scheme, providing more money and introducing a new payment card to remove the stigma associated with the current paper vouchers. Families will also have access to a wider range of foods and more retailers will be taking part. This payment is part of Best Start Grant, meaning families can apply for all payments on one form, in order to receive everything they are entitled to.

These first payments are already making differences to families across Scotland, helping to lift them out of poverty and secure a better future.

This month, we will launch our sixth payment – Funeral Support Payment. This will help people on low incomes who are struggling with the costs of a funeral.

The new benefit will be backed by an additional investment of around £2 million. This has allowed us to widen eligibility to 40% more people than the current UK Government benefit, helping far more people in these very difficult circumstances.

Over the past year, we have also supported local authorities to remove burial and cremation charges for people aged 18 and under.

Assuming the necessary cooperation from the UK Government, our Job Start Payment will be delivered in spring 2020. The Job Start Payment is a new payment to help young people with the cost of moving into the workplace after a period of unemployment. In its first year, around 5,000 young people could benefit from this support.

The £250 payment (or £400 if a person has children) will help with things like travel costs, clothing, lunches and other expenses on return to work. Care leavers will get this help if they are receiving a qualifying benefit, even if they have not had a period of unemployment.

Further social security benefits will be introduced in the coming year:

- this autumn, our new Young Carer Grant will become available. £300 a year will be given to young carers aged 16, 17 and 18 with caring responsibilities, to help them to do the things that are the norm for other young people. We expect that this payment will help 2,400 young carers across Scotland

- in summer next year, we will launch our new claims service for the first of our three Disability Assistance benefits – Disability Assistance for Children and Young People. This replaces the UK Government's Child Disability Living Allowance and we will give any child in receipt of the UK Government benefit prior to their 16th birthday an automatic award of our payment up to age 18, to remove the cliff edge many young people experience currently when they turn 16.
- also in summer next year, we will deliver on our commitment to provide independent advocacy to disabled people who need help and support to access and engage with our social security system.
- from next winter, families of severely disabled children will receive Winter Heating Assistance – an annual payment of £200 to help with the costs of keeping their homes warm, benefiting 16,000 children.

First Job Start Payments in Spring 2020



We know that the experience of applying and qualifying for disability assistance in the current benefits system can be degrading, humiliating and highly frustrating. This is unacceptable in any case, but is particularly harrowing for people with terminal illnesses.

To make sure that the introduction of our disability assistance embodies our values of treating people with dignity and respect, we have removed the arbitrary timescale that is currently used to assess terminal illness. Instead, the Chief Medical Officer will publish guidance for medical practitioners that will allow them to use their clinical judgement, allowing people to be fast-tracked for their benefit and paid at the highest rate.

Delivering Scotland's social security system with compassion is our focus. We also want to make sure that people are able to receive all the assistance from us that they are entitled to.

We are committed to addressing barriers to access. We will publish our first benefit take-up strategy in October this year, outlining a suite of activities and interventions to promote Scottish benefits and support eligible individuals to take them up.

Shifting the curve on child poverty

The most recent statistics show almost a quarter of children live in relative poverty in Scotland and independent projections suggest that this could rise in the coming years as a result of welfare cuts imposed by the UK Government.

We will not stand by and let this happen. We will again this year spend around £100 million on mitigating measures to protect people in Scotland from the worst damage caused by these cuts.

Last year, our direct support to low-income families with children was £527 million – above and beyond core universal services such as education and health. We are committed to doing everything we can to lift children out of poverty and prevent others from falling into it.

**Lift
30,000
children
out of poverty**



The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, unanimously passed by the Scottish Parliament, introduced new statutory targets to eradicate child poverty by 2030. We are the only part of the UK to have set our ambition to eradicate child poverty in statute.

Our first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan sets out concrete actions to make progress on this ambition. We are clear that the only way to deliver the fairer and more prosperous Scotland we all wish to see is through joined-up action across the country – with a key focus on tackling child poverty.

Across government we are taking action to increase incomes and reduce household costs. Alongside this, we are also taking steps to mitigate the impact of poverty on children and young people today – to help them achieve the best outcomes.

We are working closely with partners to maximise impact and are taking steps to more closely link programmes together to ensure that families receive the complete support package they need.

Backed by a multimillion pound package of investment, including the £50 million Tackling Child Poverty Fund, we are supporting work across Scotland to help lift parents, families and children out of poverty.

The first year progress report set out that 48 of the 58 actions were in progress or already delivered. These include:

- our devolved employability service, Fair Start Scotland, which launched in April last year. Taking a different approach to the UK Government, our service doesn't penalise people through sanctioning benefits
- increasing the minimum level of School Clothing Grants to £100 for every eligible child. This is a significant boost to previous levels and benefits 120,000 children each year
- delivering all three Best Start Grant payments, backed by £21 million in 2019-20

We will continue other work to support children and families and tackle poverty. Over the coming year, we will:

- begin to deliver our new Parental Employability Support. It will provide intensive support to low income parents through to 2022, backed by an investment of £12 million
- pilot ways to identify and address the barriers faced by disabled parents to enter and sustain employment. The pilots will begin next year, supported by a £6 million investment
- collaborate with Timewise on a feasibility study for a new approach to flexible work
- launch our new Access to Childcare Fund to support the development of innovative and flexible childcare provision for low-income families
- expand our Children's Neighbourhoods Scotland programme to further sites in urban areas, a small town and a rural community

Our work so far is providing a package of support to families – from birth to school and through to employment – all to boost incomes and reduce costs.

However, we know it will take considerable further investment and bold action, such as the Scottish Child Payment, to achieve the required reduction in child poverty we want to see.

The Scottish Child Payment

The Scottish Child Payment is an ambitious and direct measure that will tackle child poverty head on by putting more money into parents' and carers' pockets and helping them to make ends meet. It will help to raise children out of poverty as well as helping to prevent those just above the poverty threshold from sliding under.

It is progressive, backed by significant investment and makes Scotland the only part of the UK that is making such a serious commitment to reduce and ultimately eradicate child poverty.

It will be an entirely new benefit delivered by Social Security Scotland and will provide eligible families with £10 a week for every child under 16. It will be paid monthly and increased annually in line with inflation. Eligibility will be based on qualifying benefits including Universal Credit and legacy benefits.

When delivered in full, 410,000 children will be eligible – over a third of all children in Scotland – and it will be backed by £180 million of investment each year.

It is estimated that the payment will lift 30,000 children out of relative poverty when fully rolled out (a 3 percentage point reduction) and increase family incomes for thousands more. For eligible families with two children under the age of 16, the Scottish Child Payment will boost their income by over £1,000 each year.

To make sure those in need benefit from the new payment as soon as possible, we are making it available earlier than planned to children under 6 years old. Around 60% of all children in poverty live in a family where a child is under 6 years old and making a difference in the early years of a child's life has the biggest impact on long-term outcomes.

Assuming the cooperation of the UK Government, we will begin taking applications from eligible families with children under the age of 6 in the autumn of next year, with the first payments being made by Christmas 2020 – ahead of the schedule set out previously.

It will be available to all remaining eligible families with children under 16 by the end of 2022. There will be no cap on the number of children eligible per family.

Our experience with the new Best Start Grant payments shows that when barriers are removed, stigma is eliminated and people are encouraged to apply, people will take up the benefits on offer.

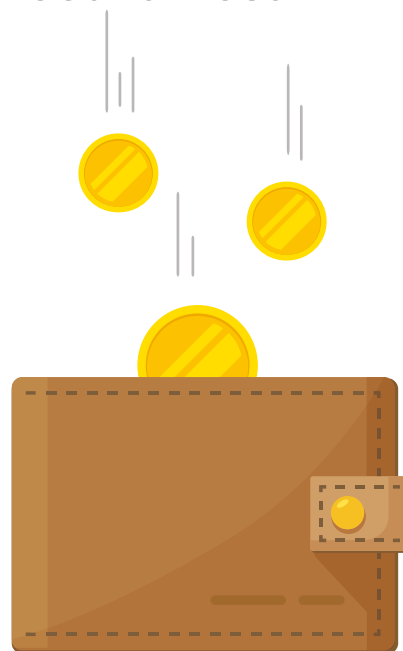
The Scottish Child Payment will be transformative – it will invest in families to shift the curve of child poverty and will make a positive difference to the lives of thousands of children in Scotland.

Doing even more for families

Alongside the new Scottish Child Payment, we will take further new action to support children and families and tackle poverty, backed by our Tackling Child Poverty Fund.

We will look across the work we do to see how best to align programmes and integrate support. This will provide a more cohesive package of support, focused on improving outcomes for individuals and families in ways which meet their complex sets of needs.

**An extra
£500 per child
per year
for families who
need it most**



Using the opportunities presented by our expansion of early learning and childcare provision, we will provide £500,000 to establish the Family Learning Scotland Programme. Family learning will be offered in or near early learning and childcare settings and will be targeted at priority families. It will help parents to learn about early childhood development and how to support their children's learning. It will also build parents' confidence in their own capacity to learn, acting as a catalyst to help them take up adult learning, training opportunities and gain employment.

We will provide an additional boost of over £4 million to parental employability programmes, facilitating better local connections between employability services and the expansion of early learning and childcare. This will involve supporting parents to start a career and progress in work, including within the early learning and childcare sector, and enhance families' incomes through work or earnings. This means that our total investment in parental employment support will increase to £22 million between 2018 and 2022.

We know that there are links between homelessness and child poverty. We will take action to prevent low income families from becoming homeless by improving access to advice and providing direct support on housing options, income maximisation, financial inclusion, employment and wellbeing.

We will:

- launch a new £1.5 million Homelessness Prevention Fund to increase and spread the work of social landlords in supporting low-income families in social housing in ways that help to prevent crisis points and avoid homelessness
- work with local authorities to align Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and Child Poverty Delivery Plans providing new opportunities to join up resources and better support low-income families
- explore with Job Centre Plus how they can better support families on low incomes when they access services, in light of the challenges they may face

We will build on good practice around support for young parents, learning from the success of projects such as the Clackmannanshire Young Parents Project. Supported by an initial £1 million, we will work to test this model in other parts of Scotland to help improve the life chances of young parents and their children.

Key workers will enable young parents to receive the support they need, including access to good quality housing, help around employment education and training and the financial help that they are entitled to.

Suitable homes for everyone

Tackling homelessness

Everyone needs a home – a safe, warm place to live, feel secure and have a sense of belonging. Home is part of physical and emotional health and wellbeing but, for some people in Scotland, homelessness is their current reality. We are determined to eradicate homelessness in our country.

Last year, in response to the recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, we published an action plan to set the direction for real and lasting change, working with the wider public sector and backed by investment of £50 million.

Over three years and beginning this financial year, we are investing £32.5 million in our Rapid Rehousing and Housing First programmes. As a result of our long-term approach to homelessness prevention, we have seen a 40% reduction in the number of homelessness applications and assessments since the peak in 2005-06.

Every local authority is now implementing their rapid rehousing transition plan, which will ensure that people who become homeless move to a settled home as soon as possible.

Our Housing First programme will ensure that rapid rehousing is possible for all, by providing support to those with multiple and complex needs, helping them to find and stay in suitable housing and tackle mental health challenges and addictions. In the past year, around 100 people have been supported in this way and we will support hundreds more this year, recognising that a safe and secure home is the best base for recovery.

As part of the transformational programme set out in the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, we will launch a fund of up to £4.5 million for third sector organisations on the frontline to innovate and transform the services they provide.

In addition, this year, we will:

- provide up to £2 million to support our partnership with Social Bite, who are working with a range of partners to deliver Housing First Pathfinders in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Stirling, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. These pathfinders will support over 800 people with multiple and complex needs experiencing homelessness into a permanent home with support by spring 2021
- provide £8 million to support implementation of rapid rehousing transition plans in every area
- implement changes to the law, removing the duty on local authorities to assess whether a homeless applicant became homeless intentionally, making receiving support easier for people who have difficulties in their lives, such as financial or mental health issues
- develop plans to remove the requirement for people facing homelessness to have a connection to a council area before they can receive support from that local authority
- work with third sector partners to change attitudes to homelessness
- introduce legislation in the coming year to extend the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, with a view to it coming into force by the end of this Parliament. This will reduce the amount of time all people experiencing homelessness can spend in unsuitable accommodation
- publish information about how homelessness affects different groups within our communities by the end of this year, making sure, in particular, that our work takes proper account of the different reasons for women becoming homeless and addressing those
- create a domestic abuse homelessness prevention pathway to support women who have experienced domestic abuse to find safe accommodation
- develop a care leavers homelessness prevention pathway, building on our work this year to better understand what support people with care experience need to reduce their risk of becoming homeless and what specific support care leavers need if they do become homeless

Housing

Since 2007, more than 86,000 affordable homes have been delivered, including over 59,000 for social rent. We are on track to achieve our target of delivering 50,000 affordable homes, 35,000 for social rent, within this term of Parliament, with over half of those already completed.

Our ambitious target is backed by more than £3.3 billion, the single biggest investment in, and delivery of, affordable housing since devolution.

We are working to increase the number of affordable homes of all tenures in communities across Scotland. Working closely with local authorities to make sure we provide the right homes in the right places, we are making up to £25 million available between 2016 and 2021 to the Rural Housing Fund and a further £5 million to meet the specific housing needs of our island communities.

We want to make sure that new affordable homes are accessible to everyone in our communities. In 2017-18, 99% of all new build council and housing association homes met the Housing for Varying Needs Standards and 744 homes were purpose built for older people or disabled people.

We will publish refreshed guidance for local authorities to support them to develop their local housing strategies. These set out the strategic vision and priorities for the future of housing and housing-related services in their areas.

The refreshed guidance will include strengthened requirements relating to Gypsy/Travellers to make sure that their accommodation needs are identified and better understood. It will also include requirements relating to the supply of wheelchair accessible housing across Scotland to provide more choice and flexibility for disabled people and their families.

This work is not only providing affordable homes for people across Scotland, it is also contributing to our economy and helping us to achieve our other priorities.

Support for first-time buyers with up to **£25,000** towards their deposits



It is estimated that the Affordable Housing Supply Programme benefits our economy by £1.4 billion each year and supports between 10,000 and 12,000 jobs. Ensuring that new homes are energy efficient is key to tackling the global climate emergency and, by keeping heating costs low, contributes to our efforts to tackle poverty.

We will also continue to support people in Scotland to sustain their tenancies through Discretionary Housing Payments. This year, we will provide more than £63 million to help 70,000 households sustain their tenancies and protect them from the impact of the UK Government's bedroom tax and other welfare cuts.

We also want to ensure we have a healthy home ownership and new build sector. We welcomed publication of the short-life working group's report *New Housing & Future Construction Skills: Adapting and Modernising for Growth* in May. We will respond to the recommendations by the end of the year.

We will deliver a £150 million national pilot scheme to provide support for first-time buyers with up to £25,000 towards their deposits. The scheme will launch in December this year and will be open to all first-time buyers, regardless of income or eligibility for other existing schemes.

The new scheme adds to existing programmes, Help to Buy (Scotland) and the Low Cost Initiative for First-Time Buyers, through which investment of £1.2 billion since 2007 has already helped more than 32,000 households buy a home.

We are taking action to tackle issues with short term lets in some areas. To help councils balance the needs and concerns of their communities with wider economic and tourism concerns, we have consulted on the regulatory powers they need and will announce our plans later this year.

We continue to support the growth of the Build to Rent sector in Scotland to boost the supply of good quality homes for private rent through a range of measures covering planning advice, taxation, tenancy reform and a rental income guarantee scheme.

The Building Scotland Fund provides a source of loans for eligible schemes, as well as investing £94 million to-date in supporting the wider development of 5,500 new homes for rent and sale across all tenures, together with other regeneration, industrial and commercial property investments.

Looking ahead, the Building Scotland Fund will continue to support housebuilding growth in Scotland, including through the SME housebuilding sector.

We need to plan for the future of our housing stock to make sure that everyone in Scotland has a high quality and sustainable home that they can afford and which meets their needs.

We want to build this vision together with the people of Scotland and so have engaged widely with stakeholders over the past year, including local government, businesses, the third sector, home owners, tenants and others.

We published our draft vision and principles in July and will consult widely on these and how we make them a reality over the next few months. We will then publish our Housing to 2040 vision and route map in spring next year.

Scotland's third sector

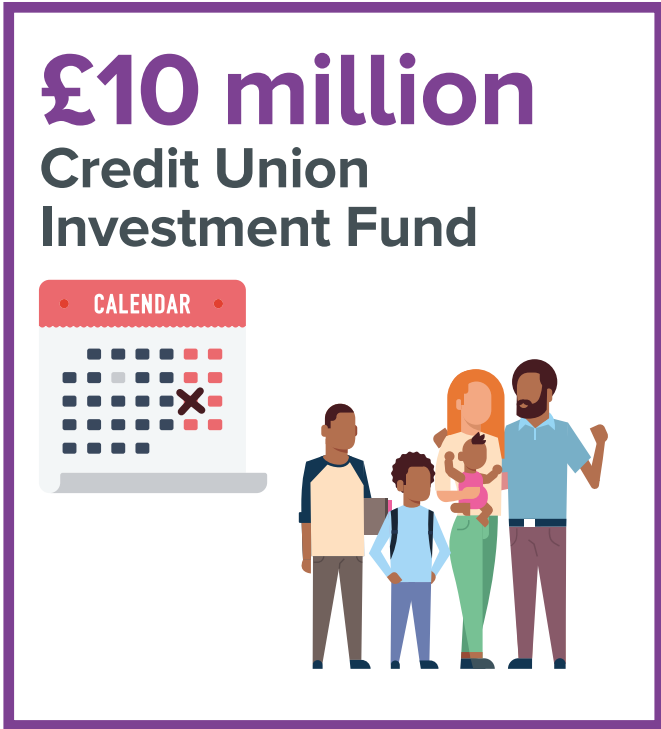
There are over 24,500 registered charities, 6,000 social enterprises and an estimated 20,000 community groups working across Scotland.

This year, we will provide £24.9 million to strengthen this diverse sector. We will work to identify more opportunities for multi-year grant programmes, as well as test new innovative models of commissioning and social investment.

Building on the results of a national consultation on charity law, we will work collaboratively with partners to continue to develop and refine proposals to promote transparency and accountability.

Scotland's eco-system of support for social enterprise is world-leading. Since the launch of Scotland's Social Enterprise Strategy, we have invested more than £25 million in the sector and social enterprises now contribute £2.3 billion annually to our economy.

Last year, we hosted the Social Enterprise World Forum, welcoming more than 1,400 social entrepreneurs from 47 countries and earlier this year we launched the new £17 million 'Scottish Social Growth Fund'. By next spring, we will publish the second social enterprise action plan, co-produced with the sector, to continue to drive forward this inclusive way of doing business.



This spring, we published a new *National Volunteering Outcomes Framework*.

Volunteers contribute over £2 billion to our economy each year and there are 1.2 million volunteers in Scotland giving up their time to help their communities.

Volunteering can improve people’s wellbeing and physical and mental health, as well as improve confidence, strengthen social networks and build bonds in and between communities. This year, we will launch a delivery plan for the Framework, including clear and measurable indicators to track progress.

The credit union movement in Scotland has more than 410,000 members. We will develop a national strategy to further grow and strengthen this important sector so that it can continue to provide ethical savings and loans to people from all walks of life – safeguarding them against exploitative rates and a cycle of debt.

In spring 2020, we will introduce a £10 million Credit Union Investment Fund which will provide loans to support credit unions to grow memberships and improve their systems.

Scotland on the global stage

Scotland’s place in the world is uncertain as a result of the UK’s departure from the EU. Rising tensions on global trade and the increasingly evident impact of the global climate emergency means the way we interact with the rest of the world has never been more important.

Scotland is committed to being a good global citizen – we want to be open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally, playing our part in tackling global challenges such as poverty, injustice, inequality and climate change.

Our expanded international network stretches across a number of European countries, as well as the USA, Canada and China. These innovation and investment hubs play a key role in maintaining Scotland’s strong reputation worldwide. We will continue to invest in our overseas networks, creating a single, unified platform to foster long-term connections that will support the growth of our exports and attract investors, students and visitors to Scotland.

Since the EU referendum, there have been more than 400 Ministerial engagements with other European countries. We present ourselves as a positive and open European country, keen to collaborate to address global challenges and share our experience and knowledge.

We have participated in multilateral work too, taking part in the Arctic Circle Assembly and hosting the Nordic Council Forum. We will publish our first Arctic Policy Framework this month.

These international connections give us support and new perspectives as well as the opportunity to contribute to tackling some of the world’s biggest challenges and play our part in pursuing the *UN Sustainable Development Goals*.

As well as taking steps to address the global climate emergency in Scotland, our international standing enables us to work with other nations to tackle it.

The poor and vulnerable are the first to be affected by climate change, and will suffer the worst, yet have done little or nothing to cause the problem.

That is why we established a Climate Justice Fund in 2012 and will provide up to £21 million by 2021 for climate justice-related activities around the world. This will support work to secure access to food, water and energy as well as help to boost levels of climate literacy and supporting advocacy.

We continue to implement our International Development Strategy in our Sub-Saharan Africa partner countries, furthering our partnerships with Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia.

This year, we will support a newly-expanded programme to protect vulnerable groups in Malawi and Zambia. Following the success of Police Scotland's work with police forces in these countries to help them tackle gender-based violence and improve child protection, the programme will support leadership to tackle local issues and give support to a wider range of marginalised groups such as women, children, those with disabilities, LGBTI and people with albinism.

We will review our Small Grants Programme, and whilst that review takes place, offer the chance for small organisations to apply for grants to strengthen their safeguarding and governance processes.

We will continue to fund scholarships for women and girls in Pakistan to allow them to pursue their education. This support will continue through women and girls' secondary education, into an undergraduate degree and onwards to cover a Masters degree.

Scotland is a place of safety for those fleeing conflict and persecution.

Since 2015, every local authority has contributed to helping more than 3000 people find safety in Scotland. We are working with COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council to support refugees and people seeking asylum to integrate into our communities through the New Scots refugee integration strategy. We will publish a progress report on our work in the spring and, in the next year, we will publish an Anti-Destitution Strategy focused on people who have no recourse to public funds.

We provide Crisis Grants to families joining refugees in Scotland under family reunion rules, giving them the financial support they need to meet their basic needs before they are able to access welfare benefits.

Current refugee resettlement programmes, including the Syrian Resettlement Programme, are due to end early next year. The UK Government has said that this important work will continue as one global scheme. We are working with our local government partners to develop our approach to the future of refugee resettlement.

Strengthening places

We and COSLA have adopted the Place Principle – this is an approach to encourage better collaboration and community involvement. It will help to make best use of resources and assets, improving the way that services within a place are joined up to increase their impact.



Putting the principle into action will allow local areas to respond to issues and circumstances in the ways which work best for them, driving inclusive growth, improving wellbeing and achieving better outcomes for people and communities.

This year, we will:

- work with local partners and communities to develop local place plans and pilot collaborative approaches across different sectors such as housing, transport and town centres
- promote equality and engage diverse groups to create joined-up solutions that make the most of the assets areas already have and make sure that the right extra support and investment is provided to make a difference
- provide around £11 million from the Investing in Communities Fund, awarding multi-year funding to help local areas plan over the longer term and develop holistic responses to the priority issues for people in their communities
- create a new website by the end of this year to act as a central resource for promoting and implementing the Place Principle

Local governance

Our main goal is to ensure Scotland is a country where everyone is valued, treated with dignity and respect and has access to opportunities and a good quality of life.

To do this, we must listen to people and communities.

Last year, over 4,000 people responded to an invitation from Scottish Government and local government to help us make sure we can achieve this goal. They told us that communities work best when they have local control and influence over decisions that affect them most.

That is why we are working with local government and wider public services to further empower local communities, councils and their partners. People told us they wanted to see a transformation in how decision-making arrangements work in Scotland and this year we will explore how we can make that a reality, creating a system of inclusive local democracy based on rights which will improve outcomes for people and communities.

Regeneration

Some of our communities still suffer the effects of deprivation and disadvantage, limiting people's health, wellbeing and future potential. Transforming local areas through regeneration works best when communities are in control.

We will maintain our capital funding for regeneration for the remainder of this Parliament. That includes the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, the evergreen Scottish Partnership for Regeneration in Urban Centres Fund and Clyde Gateway which is transforming the social, economic and environmental outlook for communities in the area.

There is still too much unused and unproductive land in Scotland, including long-term vacant and derelict land which blights some of our most disadvantaged communities. We will continue to tackle this through the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund and we are exploring ways to accelerate investment to grow industrial and commercial capacity across Scotland's most disadvantaged areas.

Land reform

We are improving Scotland's system of land ownership, use, rights and responsibilities, so that our land contributes to a fair and just society while balancing public and private interests.

We will invest £10 million this year and next to the Scottish Land Fund, supporting community ownership to boost local amenities and support local economies.

We have provided funding to Community Land Scotland to support urban communities to take ownership of land and assets. We have established the Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce to help communities bring a new lease of life to vacant land and we will consider its recommendations.

We will introduce a new community right to buy for sustainable development by spring next year and will hold an international land reform conference in 2020 where we can demonstrate our progress.

How we use our land is part of our response to the global climate emergency and other challenges such as housing, social inclusion and food security. This year, we will begin work to enable further renewable energy developments on Scotland's national forests and land, ensuring that any new developments pay community benefits.

In the coming year, we will bring together experts from across the world to explore how we can tackle land reform issues and make sure land reform benefits everyone in Scotland.

Underpinning land reform is the need to know who owns land in Scotland. This year, we will continue our work on regulations for a new Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land, aiming for these to be in force by 2021.

The Scottish Crown Estate Act received Royal Assent this year, part of which allows for local control and decision-making over Crown assets. We will ensure that communities benefit from the net revenue generated from the Scottish Crown Estate marine assets out to 12 nautical miles, making payments directly to coastal local authorities.

We will publish a Strategic Management Plan by spring next year – it will set out objectives and priorities for Scottish Crown Estate assets including seabed leasing rights out to 200 nautical miles and describe how around half of Scotland's foreshore, as well as rural and urban property, will be managed in ways that benefit communities.



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