

Fairer Scotland Action Plan, Shifting the Curve and the Life Chances of Young People in Scotland

Progress Report 2019

December 2019

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This year's annual Fairer Scotland Action Plan progress report provides an update on the actions within the Fairer Scotland Action Plan, and also the progress made in respect of the recommendations in two reports produced by our Independent Advisor on Poverty and Inequality.

There is no doubt I am pleased with the progress we have made over the past year and that I am proud of our actions to support families on low incomes. In 2018-19 we invested over £1.4 billion to support low income households including, for example, free school meals, our Pupil Equity Fund, delivering affordable homes and energy efficient measures, supporting people with council tax and new social security benefits.

However, part of that investment is over £100 million to mitigate against the effects of UK Government welfare policies. Scottish Government research¹ has estimated that UK Government cuts since 2010 could reduce annual social security spending in Scotland by £3.7 billion in 2020-21. There is now a variety of evidence and reports highlighting the damage caused by UK Government policies that have led to hardship, debt, and poverty.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights articulated the harsh realities of the UK Government's actions in his final report², published in May. Professor Alston was highly critical of the UK Government's welfare cuts and austerity and the impact this has on people, stating that the UK Government was presiding over the "systematic immiseration of a significant part of the British population". He also said it was "outrageous" devolved administrations had to protect people from another government's policies. I agree. Imagine the impact we could have made if we had been able to spend that £100 million on other anti-poverty measures.

JRF has also pointed to a rise over the past few years of half a million children in the UK now living in poverty, and that in-work poverty is rising faster than employment driven by increasing poverty amongst working parents³ due to UK welfare changes.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/2018-annual-report-welfare-reform-9781787812628/>

² <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/39/Add.1>

³ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2018>

We are determined to reverse this trend, which is why we announced a new benefit designed to tackle child poverty head on.

The new Scottish Child Payment represents a significant investment in order to shift the curve on child poverty. When delivered in full by the end of 2022, 410,000 children will be eligible – over a third of all children in Scotland – lifting around 30,000 children out of poverty. And we are going further by introducing the payment early for eligible families with children under six, with the first payments being made by Christmas 2020, benefitting an estimated 170,000 children.

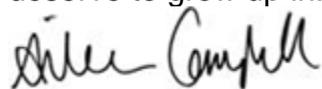
Taking such bold action shows our clear commitment to creating a fairer Scotland. The payment has been described by the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland as a ‘game-changer’ in tackling inequality, and is part of a broad range of measures we have put in place: from delivering affordable housing to significantly expanding early learning and childcare hours; from supporting people into work to promoting the living wage; and delivering our new Best Start Grant to providing advice to families on how to maximise their household incomes.

That is the kind of action we are taking, and we are doing this against a backdrop of uncertainty and stress caused by Brexit – another major risk to increasing poverty. As the Scottish Government has made clear since 2016, leaving the EU will be disastrous for Scotland’s economy⁴ and for the people of Scotland. The potential scenario of a No Deal Brexit would see the poorest and most vulnerable in our society bear the greatest burden, and a further 130,000 people in Scotland pushed into poverty⁵. That is unacceptable.

We do not work to create a fairer Scotland in isolation. It is through well-established partnerships that we are able to continue making progress in realising our vision of a Fairer Scotland and I would like to thank all the Fairness Pledges that have been made by a number of organisations.

I am confident that the momentum we are building will only increase as we work to meet the statutory targets we have set ourselves so that children in poverty today do not become the parents of children in poverty tomorrow. We know that, to make the impact we want to see and reverse poverty trends, we must work together and put fairness and equality at the heart of everything we do.

The UN Special Rapporteur said in a lecture in Edinburgh in October: “All of this indicates that Scotland is, at least for now, on a very different trajectory when it comes to the social protection of its population.” We must continue on this trajectory in order to deliver the fairer Scotland we all seek and the equal Scotland our children deserve to grow up in.



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⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/deal-brexiteconomicimplications-scotland/>

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-overview-no-deal-preparations/>

Introduction

The Scottish Government made a commitment to provide the Scottish Parliament with an annual report on progress made in relation to the Fairer Scotland Action Plan⁶ (FSAP) published in 2016. This report follows similar reports published in 2017 and 2018.

FSAP is built on five high-level ambitions that we will continue to focus on in the period to 2030: a fairer Scotland for all; ending child poverty; a strong start for all young people; fairer working lives; and a thriving third age. It contains 50 actions that we will take across this parliamentary term with a call to everyone to create a fairer, more equal society. The action plan supports the vision for a fair, smart, inclusive Scotland, where everyone can feel at home. It also sets out our ambition for a country where poverty rates are amongst the lowest in Europe, and where there is genuine equality of opportunity for all by 2030.

In addition this progress report provides an update on the actions taken in relation to two reports published by the then Independent Poverty and Inequality Advisor, Naomi Eisenstadt. *Shifting the Curve*⁷ (StC), published in 2016, details 15 recommendations for the Scottish Government and others to help shift the curve on poverty and reduce poverty levels in Scotland significantly.

One recommendation from this report was to review the life chances of young people in Scotland. A review carried out by Scottish Government analysts, published in July 2017⁸, formed the basis of Naomi's second report. *The Life Chances of Young People in Scotland*⁹ (Life Chances) was published in 2017 and offers 18 further recommendations on how to best support young people aged 16-24, regardless of their background. These recommendations are focused on ensuring young people have the best start in adult life and helping to create the conditions that provides them with the best chances of success. This progress report provides the first update on progress made against the Life Chances report recommendations.

Rather than publishing three separate updates, we have produced a single thematic progress report. This provides an update on all 50 actions and 33 recommendations which reflects the cross-government work that is taking place to challenge inequality and increase fairness. The themes in the progress report are:

- Employment, including youth employment
- Education and childcare
- Housing
- Social security and benefit up-take
- Social policy
- Equality

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-action-plan/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-advisor-poverty-inequality-shifting-curve-report-first-minister/>

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/life-chances-young-people-scotland-evidence-review-first-ministers-independent/>

⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-advisor-poverty-inequality-life-chances-young-people-scotland-report/>

- Health, including mental health

Each theme has its own section which begins with a strategic overview that sets out the Scottish Government's aims and ambitions in this area. This is followed by the relevant actions or recommendations from the three reports along with the progress we have made against these.

There are some actions and recommendations which do not fit into any of the themes listed above. A separate update is provided on these towards the end of the progress report under 'Other actions'.

We have also provided a table which sets out our progress at a glance, offering a quick overview of the current status of the actions or recommendations across all three reports. The actions and recommendations were short, medium and longer term up to 2030 and therefore we have used the following key:

Completed	Action or recommendation completed
In progress	Progress on the action or recommendation
Continuous programme of work	Some recommendations or actions ask us to 'do more' or 'improve' with no clear end point. These are defined as continuous
Early stages of delivery	Initial phases of delivery

Employment, including youth employment

Promoting fair, inclusive and flexible employment is a key way in which the Scottish Government can support people into work, tackle low pay, and help lift people out of poverty. We recognise there are people in Scotland who can struggle to find and retain employment or find the hours they need. We want to do as much as we can to ensure that as many people as possible benefit from working. That is why we are taking strong action to help people work and earn more, including promoting payment of the real Living Wage through our work to build a Living Wage nation and delivering support through our devolved employability service, Fair Start Scotland.

Scotland's employment rate remains high (74.4%) compared with historical records and our unemployment rate remains low (4.0%)¹⁰. However, we recognise that those facing the greatest barriers to employment will still require more individualised support which is better integrated with other services. This is why we have pledged to tackle these barriers, including by reducing the disability employment gap by at least half by 2038. In addition, our £22 million investment in a new Parental Employment Support Programme will be based on a successful keyworker model which will help parents to enter employment and to progress through a career. In order to maximise the impact of our massive investment in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), £4 million of this investment is specifically targeted at better aligning employability services with the expansion of funded ELC. This investment will help parents whose children are benefiting from the funded hours to improve their skills, advance their career and take advantage of new opportunities within the ELC workforce.

Our Fair Work Action Plan, published in February, sets out a range of measures to support employers to embed fairer working practices, including a benchmarking tool and online support to assess current practice. Scotland's Fair Work approach, underpinned by the Fair Work Convention's Framework, recognises that fair work benefits individual workers, the business, the economy and wider society. The Framework sets out what employees can expect in terms of fair work, and the fair and inclusive workplace practice and culture that employers should adopt. The launch of the refreshed Scottish Business Pledge¹¹ on 10 October ensures closer alignment to the Fair Work Framework and makes the relevance to Fair Work First clear.

Through Fair Work First we will attach criteria to more contracts, grants and other funding awarded by the Scottish Government and the wider public sector. Specifically, we will ask employers to commit to paying the Living Wage, no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts, action to tackle the gender pay gap, investment in skills and training, and genuine workforce engagement, such as trade union recognition.

¹⁰

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/regionallabourmarket/november2019>

¹¹ <https://scottishbusinesspledge.scot/>

Young people are key to our future economic success so, having already met the commitment set out in Developing the Young Workforce to reduce youth unemployment by 40% four years ahead of schedule, we will continue to do as much as we can to prepare them for the world of work and open up job opportunities for all.

Fairer work

FSAP	43. We will do more to help people in Scotland work flexibly
FSAP	44. We will improve employment services for disabled people
FSAP	45. By the end of 2016, we will launch a pilot 'Returners' project to help bring experienced women back into the workplace after a career break
FSAP	46. We will tackle discrimination on pregnancy and maternity leave in the workplace
FSAP	47. We will help those older people who want to keep working after they have reached state pension age
Life Chances	9. Lobby the UK Government about exploitative zero hour contracts
StC	2. Encourage pay ratio disclosure as a way of tackling pay inequality
StC	4. Make family flexible working more explicit within the Business Pledge, and consider whether approaches such as the Timewise programme could promote flexible working in Scotland
StC	13. Do more to tackle occupational segregation

The Parental Employability Support Fund developed over the last 12 months will provide in-work support for low income parents from the six priority groups identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan to build skills, progress through their careers and earn more. It will also support parents currently unemployed, who are ineligible or not ready for current employability support programmes to move towards work.

To tackle workplace pregnancy and maternity discrimination, we have worked with a range of partners to create and promote best practice guidelines, hosted a series of employer training events on maternity and the rights and responsibilities, and responded to a number of UK Government consultations, including around extending redundancy protection for women and new parents (April 2019) and good work plan proposals to support families (October 2019).

We highlighted the importance of challenging occupational segregation in our careers strategy published in autumn 2019, and with education partners and the workforce alike are developing an equality action plan for publication in 2020 to help address gender segregation.

The Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, launched in March this year, outlines a series of actions we will take to address gender stereotyping and labour market inequalities in support of our commitment to reduce the gender pay gap by 2021. Our actions include: the expansion of the Workplace Equality Fund in 2019-20 to £800,000 for

23 new projects to improve workplace practices, such as providing support for women during the menopause and for victims of domestic abuse; a new careers strategy to provide advice and guidance to help challenge stereotypes; and funding a feasibility study for a 'What Works Centre for Flexible Work' to design, test and embed new approaches to increasing the availability of flexible working – in particular for low income parents. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings data published on 29 October 2019 showed that the median gender pay gap for all employees in Scotland has decreased from 15.0% in 2018 to 14.3% in 2019. The median gender pay gap for full-time employees in Scotland increased from 5.6% to 7.1% in 2019 which is still below the UK (8.9%)¹².

In order to highlight the benefits to women and businesses of improving gender equality in the workplace, the Scottish Government has revised the diversity and gender balance aspect of the Scottish Business Pledge, has undertaken an Equal Pay Audit to identify ways to reduce the gender pay gap, and is promoting gender equality more generally in a range of educational and employment settings as part of its work to deliver against the Fairer Scotland Action Plan actions. We also continue to promote flexibility for unpaid carers in the workplace – the majority of which are women – through Carer Positive.

In recognition of the importance of flexible working the Scottish Government funds, and is an active partner in, the Family Friendly Working Scotland partnership through which we work with a number of third sector organisations to support and promote the development of family-friendly working across Scotland. Funding of £159,000 in 2019-20 will support the development and growth of the 'Happy to Talk Flexible Working' campaign and delivery of Scotland's first employer 'Flexible Festival' to highlight the demand and benefit of flexible working for employers and workers.

Our Fairer Scotland for Older People: A Framework for Action¹³ sets out our commitment to enabling older people to continue working and remain in employment for as long as they wish, increasing their financial security. Since the publication of the framework we have funded the Festival of Ageing in May 2019 to celebrate older people in society and the role they play by remaining in the workforce, and are developing work to tackle ageism more generally and to recognise that more older women are now in the workplace.

The Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills response in October 2019 to the UK Government's consultation 'Good work plan: establishing a new single enforcement body for employment rights' stressed that security of employment, work and income are important foundations of a successful life and that contractual stability should be a core employer objective. He also made clear that flexible working which places disproportionate risk on workers is not fair work. We will continue to call on the UK Government to make work fairer for all.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2019>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-older-people-framework-action/>

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People: Employment Action Plan¹⁴ outlines the way in which the Scottish Government will support the commitment to at least halve Scotland’s disability employment gap by 2038. In August 2019 we published our first Recruitment and Retention Plan for Disabled People¹⁵, which sets out the Scottish Government’s approach to becoming a leading employer of disabled people.

Scotland’s devolved employability service, Fair Start Scotland (FSS), is also critical to meeting this ambition, offering pre- and in-work support to those who face barriers to finding employment, including disabled people and those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed. Participation is voluntary and by the end of September 2019, the service provided support to more than 16,000 people, with over 4,000 people entering employment¹⁶. The Scottish Government recently published the first FSS annual report and an evaluation report of the first year of operation. This showed that of over 1,000 FSS participants surveyed, 92% of people who have used the service felt they were treated with dignity and respect, and 80% felt they had a choice about the type of support they received, with 78% of these respondents feeling the support offered improved their quality of life and wellbeing.

Living Wage

FSAP	42. We will do more to promote the Living Wage
Life Chances	10. Lobby the UK Government on the need for the National Living Wage to apply to all those over 18 years old
StC	1. Build on Living Wage Accreditation – a focus on larger employers, and on incentives, would be useful

The Scottish Government has been vocal in its concerns about the UK Government’s approach to pay: the National Living Wage¹⁷ is not a real Living Wage¹⁸. The Scottish Government recognises the National Living Wage does not support young people under 25, nor will it fully compensate workers for reductions to welfare. In the Scottish Government’s response to the Low Pay Commission Consultation in 2017, we reiterated our position that the National Living Wage should apply to all workers over the age of 18, and sought assurance that measures would be put in place to mitigate this. We will continue to push for the full devolvement of employment powers to Scotland.

We continue to encourage more employers to become Living Wage Accredited and pay their workers at least the real Living Wage. The number of Scottish accredited real Living Wage employers continues to grow: with just over 1,600 accredited Living

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-employment-action-plan/>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-disabled-people-scottish-government-recruitment-retention-plan-disabled-people-2019/pages/4/>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-devolved-employment-services-statistical-summary-4/>

¹⁷ The National Living Wage is the amount of money all employees aged over 25 are legally entitled to, currently £8.21 per hour.

¹⁸ The real Living Wage is the recommended minimum hourly rate based on the cost of living, currently set at £9.30 per hour.

Wage employers, there is proportionately five times more in Scotland than in the rest of the UK. An increase in accreditation figures has been achieved through employer accreditation of all sizes with particular focus on the hospitality sector, with 200 individual uplifts in the hospitality sector already this financial year.

Making Living Wage Places launched at the beginning of the year to recognise the efforts of places that are paying and promoting the real Living Wage. In the last year, Scotland has seen Dundee become the first city in the UK to be recognised as a Living Wage Place City, and Glenrothes became the first Living Wage Place Town.

2019-20 is the second year of our three year plan to build a Living Wage Nation which helps employers in traditionally low paid sectors and locations realise the benefits of paying the real Living Wage. Using the Living Wage Nation, we are working with partners to boost the wages of an additional 25,000 people to receive at least the real Living Wage, and 7,705 workers have already seen their wages increase since 2017.

Young people's employment

FSAP	36. We will take action to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021
FSAP	37. We will significantly increase the numbers of young people getting industry experience while still at school to help them kick-start a successful career in their chosen field
Life Chances	2. Continue work to improve data collection and sharing to track post school participation in learning, training and work for young people and make better use of that information to improve service delivery and develop Scottish Government policy
Life Chances	3. Do more to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Developing the Young Workforce regional groups in building systematic engagement between local employers and schools and colleges on local and regional skills shortages
Life Chances	4. Do more to value non-academic learning routes, post-school
Life Chances	5. The Scottish Government should, through the 15-24 Learner Journey Review, ensure our FE and HE systems have more flex built in so young people can shift between routes
Life Chances	6. Employers need to think about 'job design' and recruitment processes that are free from bias and that match requirements for the job with the skill level needed to make applications
Life Chances	7. All post-school internships should be advertised and every post-school intern should get paid
Life Chances	8. Raise concerns with DWP about the quality of support offered to young people in Jobcentre Plus
StC	11. Reduce the number of government-supported employment programmes targeting this group of young people and simplify the landscape, to provide a clearer, sharper focus
StC	12. Ensure that the new approach to employer engagement in education is having an impact on improving skills for work of young people

In response to the recommendations made in our review of the learner journey for 15-24 year olds, we began work with Skills Development Scotland earlier this year to create an online learner account which supports young people in mapping their learner journey. Alongside this, we have also been working with stakeholders to create a vision for post-15 education that promotes all pathways and sets a series of expectations for each part of the system.

We will shortly be publishing a Careers Strategy to set the vision for a high standard of lifelong careers information, advice and guidance services which are accessible to all. This has been drafted in collaboration with the sector through a strategy steering group with representation from across careers services.

This is further supported by funding of £25 million in 2019-20 for Educational Maintenance Allowances which help young people aged 16 to 19 from low income families stay on in non-advanced post-16 education, either in school, a college course, or on a Learning Agreement for those not enrolled at school or college.

We are continuing to support local authorities and partners to deliver against the 'Opportunities for All' commitment for 16-19 year olds in a number of ways, including through improvements to post-16 transitions to employment. This year, through Inspiring Scotland's Our Future Now programme¹⁹, we have committed £1.9 million to provide opportunities and support to young vulnerable people who face significant barriers, helping them make successful transitions from school into employment, education or training. We have also allocated £1 million, delivered by a young person's consortium made up of representatives from Barnardo's, Action For Children, and The Prince's Trust, to help care experienced young people into employment. This programme provides placements for up to 13 weeks through partnering individuals with employers in the private sector.

We also introduced Phase 1 of the new No-One Left Behind Employability Funding Stream in April 2019, which has enabled us to work closely with local authorities under a partnership agreement. Funding of around £7 million in 2019-20 is helping provide tailored support to some young people who have left school to help them prepare for employment, training or education. Furthermore, through initiatives such as the Employability Fund and the Community Job Scotland Programme, we are encouraging training providers to pay at least the National Living Wage, provide more apprenticeship opportunities, and continue work towards meeting our commitment to increase apprenticeship starts to 30,000 by 2020.

The Fair Work Action Plan, published in February 2019, commits the Scottish Government as an employer to not utilise unpaid internships, aligning us with recommendations from the Fair Work Convention.

Evidence^{20,21} shows that the current conditionality and sanctions regime of Jobcentre Plus is ineffective in supporting people into work. This is true for all service users and is not unique to young people. We have, and will continue to, call for a full

¹⁹ <https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/funds/our-future-now/>

²⁰ http://www.welfareconditionality.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/40475_Welfare-Conditionality_Report_complete-v3.pdf;

²¹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk-2018>

review and complete overhaul of the benefits system. We are asking for more social security powers to be devolved to the Scottish Government so that we can better support people not currently working into employment and help lift them out of poverty while also improving their health and wellbeing.

Education and childcare

The early years are key for improving long-term outcomes and young people are at the heart of the Scottish Government's vision for a fairer Scotland. Ensuring children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential is one of our National Performance Framework outcomes.

We want to give Scotland's children and young people the best start in life. We believe that all children and young people, whatever their background or circumstances, deserve access to the same opportunities to help them achieve everything they can. From early learning and childcare provision to school, further and higher education, and community and adult learning and beyond, we are investing in developing and enhancing the skills of our current and future workforce to improve the life chances of young people both in and beyond education settings.

To help children to fulfil their potential we have committed to nearly doubling early learning and childcare (ELC) to increase access to high quality learning from an early age. The ELC expansion will also increase opportunities for parents to be in work, training or to study, making it easier for them to earn more and increase family incomes. The additional £4 million commitment through Programme for Government 2019-20 aims to strengthen alignment of the ELC expansion with local with parental employability support.

We are working to help close the attainment gap to level the playing field between those from the richest and poorest backgrounds. We are also supporting further and higher education sectors, community learning and training in the roles they play to provide equal opportunities for participation to improve lives and contribute to inclusive economic growth. We are also consulting on a draft framework as part of our consideration of our future out of school care policy.

Early Learning and Childcare

FSAP	29. By 2020, entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) will almost double for all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as those 2 year olds that stand to benefit most, to 1140 hours per year (from current levels of 600 hours per year)
FSAP	32. By 2018, we will ensure that every nursery in our most deprived areas has an additional qualified teacher or childcare graduate
FSAP	33. We are committed to making real progress in closing the attainment gap during the lifetime of this Parliament and to eliminate it, as far as we can, over the next decade
FSAP	35. We will tackle poverty directly for some of our most vulnerable children by delivering parity of child allowances between kinship and foster carers

StC	3. Ensure childcare commitments focus on quality to improve outcomes, and consider providing a limited number of free hours of childcare for primary school aged children
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We are doubling entitlement to funded early learning and childcare (ELC) to 1,140 hours by August 2020, and are investing an additional £2 billion in the expansion programme through our landmark funding deal with CoSLA. This will benefit all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds. Delivery progress data shows that, as of August 2019, one third of three and four year olds and eligible two year olds were already accessing more than the minimum 600 hours to which they are currently entitled. Around 80,000 households stand to benefit from the expanded entitlement, which is worth £4,500 per year per child.

As of October 2019 local authorities have recruited 94% of the 435 new graduate level posts, now referred to as Equity and Excellence Leads, which we are funding as part of the ELC expansion. The key aim of these new posts is to address the attainment gap, which will be achieved by the leads working directly with children to support their wellbeing and cognitive development, as well as supporting the upskilling of other practitioners.

Our consultation on a draft framework for out of school care, which runs from 30 August to 6 December 2019, will help inform ways in which to make childcare options for school-age children more affordable, flexible and accessible. The framework details our £3 million Access to Childcare fund which will be delivered over a two year period starting in April 2020. This fund will test the change required to remove the barriers of childcare costs and deliver after school and holiday childcare, consider appropriate delivery models to support this change and provide evidence-based solutions.

The £750 million Attainment Scotland Fund aims to tackle the poverty related attainment gap, with over £180 million invested in both 2018-19 and 2019-20. As announced in Programme for Government 2019-20, we will continue to fund the Scottish Attainment Challenge at current levels beyond the end of this Parliamentary term and into 2021-22 to continue work on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The interim evaluation of the Attainment Scotland Fund published in June 2019 demonstrates the positive impact of the fund: 88% of Head Teachers had seen improvements in closing the poverty-related attainment gap as a result of interventions supported by the Attainment Scotland Fund, and 95% expected to see improvements over the next five years.

Following the announcement in 2015 of additional funding to ensure local parity (i.e. within their local authority area) of allowances between kinship and foster carers, the Scottish Government is now working with CoSLA to agree how to best take forward the recommendations of the 2018 National Review of Foster, Kinship and Adoption Care Allowances. The implementation of action in response to these recommendations, expected from April 2020, will improve consistency and transparency for looked after children, their families and their carers across Scotland.

Making school fairer

FSAP	30. We will take action to reduce the costs of school for low income parents
FSAP	34. We will do more to address bullying in schools – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying

To help reduce the costs of the school day and to enable the full participation of children from low income families in school life, we continue to support the minimum School Clothing Grant of £100 with resource of £6 million each year, benefitting around 120,000 children. The cost of the school day toolkit²² produced by the Child Poverty Action Group in 2018 also supports schools and local authorities to address the financial barriers to learning that many families face.

Since 2015 we have made free school meals available to all children in P1-3 and to all children in families in receipt of qualifying benefits from P4 onwards, saving eligible families an average of £400 per child, per year. Young people in the upper years of secondary school are also eligible for free school meals if they receive any of the qualifying benefits in their own right.

In recognition of the stress and pressure families can face in feeding their children over the school holidays, we have increased funding to £2 million in 2019-20 to develop practical support that aims to reduce food insecurity during these periods.

In August 2019 we increased the qualifying threshold for families in receipt of both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit to ensure families did not lose their entitlement due to increases in the National Living Wage.

Our national approach to anti-bullying, Respect for All²³, provides the overarching framework to address bullying behaviour, with a focus on prevention and early intervention. A consistent and uniform approach to recording and monitoring incidents of bullying in schools has now been developed, with an expectation that all schools will use the new approach from August 2019. Aligned to Respect for All, *respectme*, Scotland's anti-bullying service supported by almost £300,000 of Scottish Government funding in 2019-20, continues to provide direct support to local authorities, youth groups and all those working with children and young people to build confidence and capacity to address all types of bullying effectively.

Recommendations on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) inclusive education across the curriculum are being delivered by the LGBT Inclusive Education Implementation Group through their action plan²⁴. The Scottish Government is also committed to publishing revised transgender guidance for schools on supporting transgender young people.

²² <http://www.cpag.org.uk/content/cost-school-day-toolkit>

²³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/respect-national-approach-anti-bullying-scotlands-children-young-people/pages/2/>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/factsheet/2019/05/lgbt-inclusive-education-implementation-group-action-plan/documents/pdf/pdf/govscot%3Adocument/Health%2Band%2BWellbeing%2B-%2BLGBT%2BInclusive%2BEducation%2BImplementation%2BGroup%2B-%2BMeeting%2BPapers%2B-%2BAction%2BPlan%2B-%2BMay%2B2019.pdf>

Widening access to Further and Higher Education

FSAP	38. We will take action to widen access to university: our ambition is that any child born today should have an equal chance of entering university, no matter what their socio-economic background is
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Statistics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency published in January 2019 show that 15.6% of Scottish full time first degree entrants to Scottish universities were from the 20% most deprived areas. We are now only 0.4 percentage points away from the Commission on Widening Access' interim target for 2021 of 16%. The Scottish Funding Council's third 'Report on Widening Access' was published in May 2019, improving the data available on widening access.

Minimum entry requirements for students living in areas of deprivation have now been set by all Scottish universities and were published for the first time in this year's prospectuses for 2020-21 entrants. Following the introduction of the Care Experienced Bursary in 2017, all of Scotland's higher education institutions have committed to guaranteeing an offer of an undergraduate place at university to care-experienced applicants who meet minimum entry requirements, which will be in place for learners entering university in autumn 2020.

In May 2019 the Commissioner for Fair Access launched Scotland's Framework for Fair Access²⁵. It comprises an online toolkit to support those working on access and the establishment of Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners. The Commissioner also published a discussion paper²⁶ on disabled students at university in February 2019, as well as his second annual report, Building on Progress towards Fair Access²⁷, in June 2019 in which he stated that Scotland was leading the way in the UK on widening access.

From 2019-20 students with the lowest incomes receive increased bursary support, and access to bursaries are increased through improvements to the HE bursary threshold and the introduction of the FE 'bursary guarantee'.

We are working to make it easier for care-experienced young people to take forward their education. In response to the recommendations made by the independent review of student support, we have increased funding for care-experienced bursaries to £8,100 per year in Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE). We are introducing a further package of commitments to help level the playing field for care-experienced young people ahead of the longer-term changes that are likely to be recommended by the Independent Care Review in its report due next year. This includes a removal of the age cap of 26 for access to the care-experienced bursary from the start of 2020-21 academic year.

²⁵ <https://www.fairaccess.scot/>

²⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commissioner-fair-access-discussion-paper-disabled-students-university/>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/commissioner-fair-access-annual-report-2019-building-progress-towards-fair-access/>

Housing

Housing has a vital role to play in meeting many of our ambitions for Scotland, including eradicating child poverty and homelessness, ending fuel poverty, tackling the effects of climate change and promoting inclusive growth.

That is why we are proud of our record on delivering affordable homes since 2007 – over 87,000 to June 2019. And we are on track to deliver on our ambitious commitment in this Parliamentary term to deliver 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 for social rent. Our housing aims also support around 10,000 to 12,000 jobs in the construction and related industries each year.

The Energy Efficient Scotland programme will transform our buildings so that they are warmer, greener and more efficient by 2040. Energy Efficient Scotland delivers across two key areas: removing poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions through more energy efficient buildings and decarbonising our heat supply.

Our Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets statutory targets to reduce fuel poverty, and we are set to spend £0.5 billion in this parliamentary term on energy efficient measures to make homes warmer and bills cheaper.

In July, the Scottish Government published ‘Housing to 2040’, the draft vision and principles of how Scotland’s housing system should look and feel in 2040. This longer term, whole systems approach presents our aspirations for a well-functioning housing system that meets people’s needs and includes high quality, energy efficient, affordable homes situated in sustainable communities.

We have also increased funding for Discretionary Housing Payments to £64 million in 2019-20 as part of our overall welfare mitigation measures to support people who have been impacted by UK Government welfare cuts. This investment is helping to protect households against freezes to Local Housing Allowance rates and includes over £50 million to mitigate in full the bedroom tax – a policy that the Trussell Trust has said contributes to need for food banks in the rest of the UK²⁸. Meanwhile, we have provided £351 million in funding for the Council Tax Reduction scheme, which helps nearly half a million households meet their council tax bills.

Our Ending Homelessness Together Fund of £50 million over 2018-23 along with our Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan aims to support prevention initiatives to end homelessness, eradicate rough sleeping and homelessness, and transform temporary accommodation, and progress has been made with the transition to rapid rehousing and Housing First Pathfinders.

²⁸ <https://www.trusselltrust.org/2019/11/05/state-hunger-2019-whats-driving-hunger-uk/>

Affordable housing

StC	7. Build more social housing
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We are investing a record £3.3 billion to support our ambitious target of delivering 50,000 affordable homes, including 35,000 for social rent, over the current Parliamentary term. Official statistics to the end of June 2019 show that we remain on track to meet the target, with a total of 26,581 affordable homes already delivered, including 17,071 for social rent.

Support for tenants

FSAP	15. We will deliver improved services for tenants in the private rented sector (PRS) in 2018
Life Chances	13. Improve housing advice for young people
Life Chances	15. Ensure that tenants and landlords understand the arrangements for enforcing private rented sector regulations, and that monitoring is in place to make sure the new arrangements work as intended
Life Chances	16. Encourage social landlords to make the social sector easier for young people to access

To help deliver improved services for tenants in the private rented sector and to drive up awareness of the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords over the last year we have:

- introduced legislation to require private landlords from 16 September 2019 to confirm that they meet the individual obligations in letting houses in Scotland as part of registering as a landlord;
- worked in partnership with Young Scot to develop the New Digs²⁹ microsite, which provides information and advice tailored to young renters aged 16-24;
- amended the tenancy deposit regulations to ensure tenants are aware of the sanctions available where a landlord fails to comply with their duties under the tenancy deposit scheme regulations to help support compliance and enforcement; and
- continued to implement the regulation of those carrying out letting agency work.

In addition, the Scottish Government has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework to guide our examination of the impacts and outcomes of the new Private Residential Tenancy, the most significant change in private renting in Scotland for almost 30 years. We are also working closely with the Nationwide Foundation whose major longitudinal, qualitative and quantitative research project on the impact of the new Private Residential Tenancy on low income tenants is now under way.

The lower rents in the social rented sector – a particularly important tenure for lone parent households and disabled people – are important in protecting the after-

²⁹ <https://young.scot/get-informed/national/what-is-new-digs>

housing costs income of lower income households. During 2019-20, funding of £10 million will be provided to Registered Social Landlords to carry out housing adaptations that will help older and disabled tenants live safely and independently at home. In February 2019 the Scottish Government published an updated Social Housing Allocations in Scotland – A Practice Guide³⁰ which includes guidance and good practice for social landlords on providing easy access to information and advice for all applicants, including young people.

Young people’s housing

FSAP	40. We will ensure that support for housing costs is not taken away from young people aged 18-21
Life Chances	14. Deliver more affordable housing options for young adults

This year we will launch a £150 million national pilot scheme to provide support of up to £25,000 for deposits for first-time buyers. The scheme will be open to all first-time buyers, regardless of income or eligibility for other existing schemes. The new scheme adds to existing equity programmes – Help to Buy (Scotland) and the Open Market Shared Equity scheme – which supported over 4,000 people into home ownership last year. Recent figures³¹³² show the support these schemes provide in helping young first time buyers get onto the property ladder: more than 80% of households are first-time buyers and more than 70% are aged 35 and under. The Open Market Shared Equity scheme, in particular, targets buyers on low to moderate incomes, with over half of the sales in 2018-19 in the 40% most deprived areas of Scotland.

The Scottish Government used the Scottish Welfare Fund and social security legislation to mitigate UK Government cuts to housing support for young people aged 18-21 until the cut was revoked by the DWP on 31 December 2018.

Fuel poverty and warmer homes

FSAP	14. We will deliver more warm and affordable homes in this parliament
StC	8. Ensure fuel poverty programmes are focused to support those on low incomes, and do more to tackle the poverty premium in home energy costs

In May 2018 the Scottish Government launched the Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map, supported by funding of £145 million in 2019-20, which set out our vision that by 2040 our homes and buildings are warmer, greener and more efficient. We are

³⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-housing-allocations-scotland-practice-guide/>

³¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/open-market-shared-equity-monitoring-characteristics-of-households-report-2016-17-to-2018-19/>

³² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/help-to-buy-scotland-monitoring-characteristics-of-households-report-2017-18-to-2018-19/>

on track to deliver our 2016 Programme for Government commitment to make £0.5 billion available over the four years to 2021 to tackle fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency.

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) is progressing well with 85% of social rented homes already meeting the first 2020 milestone. Our programme for ESSH-post 2020 sets a challenging and ambitious target that, by December 2032, all social housing will meet, or to be treated as meeting, Energy Performance Certificate Band B or to be as energy efficient as practically possible. A variety of funding sources are available to help social landlords achieve these targets, including an additional £2.9 million additional funding confirmed on 5 November through the second round of the Decarbonisation Fund.

The Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019 establishes in law our commitment to tackle the root causes of fuel poverty and to transform houses to be warmer and more energy efficient. It introduces a challenging, but importantly achievable, set of targets that, by 2040, no more than 5% of households in Scotland are to be in fuel poverty, no more than 1% in extreme fuel poverty, and the median fuel poverty gap of households in fuel poverty is no more than £250 in 2015 prices before adding inflation. All of these targets must be met not only nationwide, but within every local authority area to ensure that no part of the country is left behind. Interim targets at 2030 and 2035 will ensure we maintain momentum towards meeting these ambitious goals.

By setting targets for reducing extreme fuel poverty and implementing a definition which, by using the UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS) as a benchmark, is closely aligned to income poverty, we are prioritising households in the greatest need. The new definition also takes proper account of the cost of living issues faced by those living in Scotland's islands and other remote communities by including tailored uplifts to the MIS for households in these areas.

We are developing an ambitious Fuel Poverty Strategy to tackle fuel poverty, which will be laid in Parliament no later than September 2020. As part of this Strategy we will be setting out the characteristics of fuel poor households and considering what changes could be made to our funded schemes to better target support at those who need it most. We will work with stakeholders, including local authorities and those with lived experience of fuel poverty, to develop and publish the strategy over the coming year, and then to implement it.

By the end of 2021 we will have allocated over £1 billion since 2009 through energy efficiency programmes to make homes warmer and cheaper to heat. This includes £23.75 million allocated to Warmer Homes Scotland in 2019-20 to install energy efficiency measures to help fuel poor households make their homes warmer and easier to heat. During 2018-19 the scheme assisted 3,818 households, with each household saving an average of £313 per year on their energy bills.

Average funding per fuel poor household for our Area Based Schemes has increased by 10% in 2019-20 from the previous year. This increase reflects both a reduction in the number of fuel poor households overall, but also better targeting of resources to tackle fuel poverty.

The First Minister launched the Energy Consumer Action Plan³³ in May 2019. The action plan establishes a framework to place consumer considerations at the heart of Scotland’s energy policy – from local energy to energy efficiency and electric vehicles – and to influence change across Great Britain.

Ending homelessness

FSAP	16. We will build on Scotland’s world-leading homelessness rights
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We continue to progress the work outlined in our Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan³⁴, which is backed by a £50 million Ending Homelessness Together Fund. £32.5 million of this funding, together with funding from the Health portfolio, supports local authorities in developing and implementing their Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans and to roll out the Housing First approach to provide people with permanent, settled accommodation and help their longer term needs. We have also provided £613,700 in 2018-19 and £164,000 in 2019-20 from the fund to support frontline interventions, directly supporting people who may be at risk of rough sleeping.

Two new funds were announced in our 2019-20 Programme for Government: up to £4.5 million over three years to support third sector transformation to help end homelessness, and £1.5 million over three years for the new Homelessness Prevention Fund to support registered social landlords help low income families prevent housing crisis. These schemes draw in funding from the former Housing Voluntary Grant Scheme and the Tackling Child Poverty Fund respectively, in addition to the Ending Homelessness Together Fund.

Following consultation earlier this year, the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (Commencement No. 4) Order 2019³⁵ came into force on 7 November. It implements changes to intentionality and local connection legislation which aims to remove the barriers people face in getting the support they need when they experience homelessness. To assist staff in local authorities and other partners to adopt a person-centred approach to tackle, prevent and relieve homelessness, we published a factual update of the statutory Code of Guidance on Homelessness³⁶ on 7 November.

Another consultation earlier this year on improving temporary accommodation standards informed our Programme for Government 2019-20 commitment to extend the Unsuited Accommodation Order to all homeless households, effectively ending the use of B&B accommodation for anything longer than seven days.

A Way Home Scotland Coalition was commissioned in February 2019 to take forward work on developing pathways to prevent youth homelessness, including for

³³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/energy-consumer-action-plan-putting-consumers-heart-scotlands-energy-transition/>

³⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/>

³⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2019/316/contents/made>

³⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-guidance-homelessness-2/>

care leavers, young LGBT people and young people more generally. A paper³⁷ setting out recommendations for change to prevent homelessness for care leavers was published on 12 November.

Council Tax

FSAP	31. From April 2017, our proposed reforms will make the current Council Tax system fairer for low income families
FSAP	49. Our planned reforms to council tax will protect older people on low incomes
StC	9. Be bold on local tax reform

We are providing £351 million in 2019-20 to support the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR). CTR ensures that nearly half a million households who would otherwise struggle to pay their full council tax are instead required to pay only what they can afford. On average CTR recipients saved over £700 a year, and almost eight in 10 of those who get CTR receive a 100% reduction, so pay no council tax.

Our 2019 budget confirmed our endorsement of the Commission on Local Tax Reform's conclusion that "the present council tax system must end". We have therefore convened cross-party talks on replacing the current council tax, which are ongoing. If there is agreement on a replacement for the present council tax, we will publish legislation by the end of this Parliament, with that legislation taken forward in the following Parliament.

³⁷ <https://www.rocktrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Youth-Homelessness-Prevention-Pathway-Care-Leavers.pdf>

Social security and benefit up-take

Over the past year major progress has been made in building a new social security system for Scotland: one based on the statutory principles that social security is a human right, and has dignity, respect and fairness at its core.

We have already made strong progress in delivering the devolved benefits that support those on low incomes. This includes increasing payments to carers through the Carers Allowance Supplement by £452 this year, and the introduction of our new Best Start Grant which has three elements and can provide financial support of £1,900 for a two child family in the early years.

We are also using new social security powers to tackle child poverty head on with the introduction of the new Scottish Child Payment, which will put extra money into the pockets of low income families with children under 16 by 2022 – with early introduction for those with children under six by the end of 2020.

Our first Benefit Take-up Strategy³⁸, published on 21 October 2019, sets out our commitment to ensure that people are aware of the assistance they are entitled to, as well as encouraged and supported to access it.

Social security in Scotland

StC	6. Make effective use of new social security powers but proceed with caution
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The Scotland Act 2016 gave us new powers relating to social security, including the devolution of 11 benefits, which we are using to create a Scottish social security system based on dignity, fairness and respect. Next year we will be introducing the Scottish Child Payment, a brand new benefit for families on low incomes to help with the costs of caring for a child. This payment will provide families with an additional £10 per week, per child for all eligible children aged under 16 when fully rolled-out by the end of 2022. We will introduce the payment early for eligible families with children under six, with the first payments being made before Christmas next year. This is significantly ahead of the timetable set out in our Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, and been hailed as a ‘game-changer’ by the Child Poverty Action Group. Almost 60% of all children in poverty live in a family where a child is under six years old and up to 170,000 children will be eligible for this early payment, putting over £1,000 a year in the pockets of a two child family. The introduction of a brand new benefit so quickly is unprecedented and is a clear demonstration of the way in which we can use our new powers to make a difference to people.

³⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-security-scotland-act-2019-benefit-take-up-strategy-october-2019/>

Devolved benefits

FSAP	18. We will do more to help carers as soon as we have the ability
FSAP	28. We will create a new Best Start Grant (BSG) to bring together the system for Healthy Start food vouchers and the UK Sure Start Maternity Grant (SSMG) when powers transfer to Scottish Ministers, as part of our focus on reducing inequalities in early years, and subject to the outcome of the consultation on the Future of Social Security in Scotland
FSAP	39. We will introduce a Job Grant for young people aged 16-24 who have been out of work for six months or more
FSAP	50. We will improve the current system of Funeral Payments, so it helps more people, is more predictable and provides help more quickly

Since we increased Carer's Allowance by 13% through our Carer's Allowance Supplement in summer 2018, we have made 235,405 payments of Carer's Allowance Supplement to 91,550 carers. In 2019-20 the supplement has put an extra £452.40 into eligible carers' pockets. We invest £320 million in carers through Carer's Allowance and Carer's Allowance Supplement and also uprate these payments in line with inflation (2.4% in 2019-20).

The Best Start Grant replaced the UK Government's Sure Start Maternity Grant and introduced two new payments with widened eligibility to support families on low incomes, both in and out of work. The new benefit takes provision for the first child from £500 under the UK Scheme to up to a total of £1,100 over three payments. We do not put a cap on the number of children we help so that subsequent children, who receive nothing under the UK system, receive up to a total of £800 through the Scottish social security system.

The Pregnancy and Baby Payment opened for applications on 10 December 2018, followed by the Early Learning Payment on 29 April 2019 and the School Age Payment on 3 June. Between 10 December 2018 and 30 September 2019, more than 59,000 Best Start Grant payments had been made, totalling £17.7 million, £7.7 million of which was for the Pregnancy and Baby Payment. In comparison, the DWP paid out a total of £2 million Sure Start Maternity Grant payments in Scotland (the UK Government's benefit equivalent to the Pregnancy and Baby Payment) in the entire 2017-18 financial year, showing how promoting a benefit and designing the application process with individuals with experience of using the service can increase the take-up and financial support to low income families.

Best Start Foods launched on 12 August 2019 replacing the UK Government's Healthy Start paper voucher scheme with a new payment card. The card works similar to a bank card and can be used to buy a variety of healthy foods for low income families during pregnancy for children between one and three years old, and removes the stigma associated with the previous paper voucher system.

We launched our Funeral Support Payment in September 2019 with additional investment of around £2 million each year above the budget transferred from the UK

Government, taking the annual budget to £7 million. We have increased eligibility for the payment which means around 40% more people on low incomes will be eligible for the support. This payment provides a one-off contribution of £700 as well as other funeral costs, with the average payment expected to be around £1,300.

The Young Carer Grant – the first of its kind in the UK – launched on 21 October 2019. The Grant, a £300 payment available to 16, 17 and 18 year olds who provide care for a person/people who are normally paid a disability benefit, is intended to support young carers to do the things which are the norm for their non-caring peers, such as participate in education, training and personal development. Investment of £600,000 in 2019-20 will support an estimated 1,900 young carers.

The Scottish Government is working towards launching its new Job Start Payment (previously called Job Grant) in spring 2020 which will provide a one-off payment for young people starting a job after being out for work for six months or more. We consulted earlier this year on the proposed key eligibility criteria, the amount and format of the payment, and are working closely with the UK Government to ensure the necessary legislative powers are in place on time.

The next phase of delivery for social security payments is the delivery of the most complex payments in our programme to date. It is clear that that is a challenge, but it is also an opportunity to build trust in a decision-making process that takes account of the details of a person’s condition or disability and how it impacts on their life. This will help us to ensure that those who apply for disability payments are treated with dignity and respect at every step of the process and feel supported, not stigmatised.

Maximise benefit take-up

FSAP	17. We will make social security fairer where we can
FSAP	19. We will work with a range of partners to help people claim the benefits they are entitled to
StC	5. Do more to ensure that people claim the benefits they are entitled to

We are committed to maximising the uptake of benefits. Now in operation for over a year, the Money Talk Team – funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by the Citizens Advice Network in Scotland – offers free advice on money matters, including benefit take-up. Two thirds (67%) of those accessing the service sought advice on benefit take-up, with over £9 million in financial gains recorded for these clients. More detail on the Money Talk Team service can be found in the ‘Social policy – Fairer Scotland’ section.

On 21 October we published the first Benefit Take-up Strategy, which was developed in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. It introduces a number of new initiatives, including:

- A new £500,000 fund available for 2020 to assist organisations who are preparing their services and staff to support people who will be applying for Scottish benefits

- A new £100,000 take-up accessibility fund available for 2020 to assist organisations who support people to increase their household incomes, with an emphasis on ensuring people are aware of the financial support available to them
- Establishing a stakeholder take-up reference group
- Developing a Take-up Stakeholder Toolkit
- Two roundtable events on access to social security

As part of the Benefit Take-up Strategy, we have sought to ensure that the new benefits are as accessible as possible to maximise take-up amongst eligible families. For example, our multi-channel approach means that benefit applications can be made online, by phone or in paper form, and we are using existing data to verify eligibility where possible to remove barriers to application. Social security is an investment in people, and we are taking concrete steps to reduce the stigma around benefit receipt. People are at the centre of everything we do, and by listening to user research, we are delivering Scottish payments in ways which reflect clients' needs and respects their dignity.

The Best Start Grant provides a clear example of the success of our efforts to improve the take-up of Scottish payments. As well as improving and expanding on the UK Government Sure Start Maternity Grant eligibility, our Best Start Grant payments have integrated the administrative systems so that parents can apply for all Best Start Grant payments and Best Start Foods in a single application form. Alongside this, we are widely promoting the benefit to families who may qualify, so that as many children as possible can benefit from a payment.

Social policy

Tackling poverty and inequality while working to ensure a fairer Scotland is an issue that cuts across every Scottish Government portfolio. People and communities, particularly those which experience disadvantage and inequality, face complex and often inter-related challenges. It is therefore the responsibility of all Ministers and civil servants alike to recognise the interaction between poverty and their policies, and to work collaboratively both across government and with external organisations to address these issues.

Our first Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, covering 2018-22, sets out the action we will take to make progress towards meeting these ambitious targets, backed by a £50 million Tackling Child Poverty Fund. This approach recognises the three main drivers of child poverty reduction – increasing income for work and earnings, reducing household costs, and maximising income from social security – and the action needed across government to address these. Importantly we also recognise the need to mitigate the impacts of poverty for children living on low incomes now and ensure they are supported to reach their full potential.

We are taking action to tackle socio-economic inequality and are supporting people with lived experience of poverty to have their voices heard so that they can influence future policy development by pushing for change to public services and tackling the stigma attached to being impoverished.

We will continue to support activity that seeks to end food insecurity in Scotland, fulfilling our commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 2 on zero hunger, as an integrated part of our National Performance Framework and Good Food Nation vision.

Fairer Scotland Duty

FSAP	1. In 2017, we will introduce a new socio-economic duty on public bodies
StC	15. Commence the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act 2010, when powers are available to do so

Over the last year, the Scottish Government has published a number of Fairer Scotland Duty assessments which show how strategic decisions have been shaped to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage. This includes assessments on the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Bill and Draft Strategy, the Scottish National Investment Bank, and the Children (Scotland) and Disclosure (Scotland) Bills. In 2019-20 we are also funding a Fairer Scotland Duty National Co-ordinator post at the Improvement Service to help raise public bodies' awareness of the duty and support its implementation.

Tackling poverty

FSAP	2. We will provide £100,000 new funding so that, across Scotland, people with experience of living in poverty can speak out, tackle stigma and push for change to public services
FSAP	3. Building on the work of local Fairness and Poverty Commissions, we will establish a national Poverty and Inequality Commission in 2017/18
FSAP	7. We will do more to help people to have a say in their local areas
FSAP	26. In early 2017, we will introduce a new Child Poverty Bill

We have set in statute our ambition to eradicate child poverty through the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The Act sets four ambitious income based targets to be met by 2030, alongside interim targets, and places robust planning and reporting requirements on the Scottish Government, local authorities and Health Boards. The Scottish Government is required by the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 to publish annual reports setting out the progress made against the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Our first progress report, published earlier this year, outlines that 48 of the 58 actions committed are already in progress or have been delivered.

The work of Poverty Truth Commissions builds on this by enabling people with direct experience of poverty to speak out in order to influence policy decisions. We have provided funding of £60,000 until 31 March 2020 to the Edinburgh Poverty Truth Commission for this work, which is further supported by a community based action research project. Scottish Government resource of £185,000 in 2019-20 funds the Poverty Alliance's Get Heard Scotland programme, which is designed to engage with members of communities affected by poverty to develop and implement policies to address this.

The first Poverty and Inequality Commission (the Commission) moved to a statutory footing on 1 July 2019 in accordance with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The new Commission has appointed two members with direct experience of poverty, ensuring that the views of people with this perspective are reflected in the work of the Commission and to help influence policy and decision making. The Commission recently published advice on the first series of Local Child Poverty Action Reports³⁹ and will shortly publish its work plan for the coming year which includes continued scrutiny of progress against the child poverty targets set.

Fairer Scotland

FSAP	5. Tackle the poverty premium
FSAP	20. Over the term of this parliament, we will work to make Scotland a Good Food Nation by enabling more people to have access to affordable, healthy, nutritious food, in a dignified way
FSAP	48. Help older people claim the financial support they are entitled to

³⁹ <https://povertyinequality.scot/publication/review-of-the-local-child-poverty-action-reports/>

Life Chances	1. Develop new advice provision for young people, supported by a skilled, trained workforce
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In November 2018 we launched the Money Talk Team service (previously known as the Financial Health Check) for low income families and older people, backed by funding of £3.3 million over 2018 to 2020. This service ensures that people are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to and are not paying more than they need to for basic goods and services. In the first year of delivery the service supported 11,899 clients across Scotland, 5,242 of whom had gained financially, the total value of which was over £10 million.

The Scottish Government is working with the Local Government Improvement Service on a feasibility project for an online portal, providing a comprehensive search facility for all advice provision in Scotland, covering face to face, telephone and online help. We are currently exploring two options that would provide a platform for young people, and expect to be able to move forward with our preferred option later in 2020.

Our Fair Food Fund has been increased to £3.5 million in 2019-20 and is supporting dignified responses to food insecurity which help to tackle the causes of poverty. £2 million of this fund supports organisations that provide healthy meals and activities during the school holidays, including innovative partnership work between local authorities and third sector organisations. In September 2019 the Scottish Government committed to invest up to £1 million in FareShare and the wider network of organisations responding to food insecurity as part of Brexit mitigation plans. This builds on the investment of £500,000 in FareShare made in January 2019 to mitigate increasing demand and improve community resilience.

In support of our ambition to be a Good Food Nation, we recently published a progress report⁴⁰ on the way in which our actions across Government are contributing to making Scotland a place where everyone takes pride and pleasure in and benefits from the food they produce, buy, cook, serve, and eat each day. We plan to publish a Good Food Nation Bill as part of the legislative programme set out in the Programme for Government 2019-20. The Bill will provide a statutory framework to support our Good Food Nation aims which include a commitment to ensuring that everyone in Scotland has ready access to the healthy food they need.

Communities

FSAP	4. We will launch a new £29 million programme, including £12.5 million from the European Social Fund, to tackle poverty in Scotland
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In 2019-20 additional investment secured from the European Social Fund increased the total value of the Aspiring Communities Fund to £35 million from £29 million. As a result, the number of Aspiring Communities Fund projects across Scotland increased to 200 in 2019-20, providing more support for communities to work with

⁴⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/good-food-nation-programme-measures-2019-update/>

partners to design and deliver community-led initiatives that tackle poverty, inequality and exclusion.

The £11.5 million Investing in Communities Fund, which replaces five previous community funds⁴¹, supports communities to build capacity and develop solutions to tackle poverty in all its forms on their own terms. 250 community groups were supported in the first three year funding round announced on 1 November 2019 to design, develop and deliver a range of projects and services that will address local issues. Examples of the areas in which these funds operate include childcare provision, community food initiatives, advice and support services, health and wellbeing activities, and fuel poverty projects.

In March this year, the Scottish Government adopted the Place Principle which advocates that for a place to succeed, the planning and delivery of services and the way in which land and buildings are used need to be informed by local people. The Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Communities wrote to public bodies and agencies in August 2019 to encourage them to adopt and embed the Place Principle in the way they do business. In early 2020, together with our partners, we will launch a Place website which will provide access to supportive materials and innovative examples of the way in which the Place Principle is shaping investment and decision making.

⁴¹ The Investing in Communities fund has replaced the People and Communities Fund, the Strengthening Communities Programme, the Community Choices Fund, the Making Places Initiative and the Fair Food Transformation Fund.

Equality

Promoting equality and tackling discrimination and prejudice are fundamental to providing everyone with equal opportunities to contribute, learn, work and live healthy lives. We are working to eliminate the barriers that prevent participation and divide society, foster good relations and build resilient, cohesive communities.

We are working across government to tackle the structural inequalities that exist to eliminate discrimination, promote genuine equality of opportunity for all. Our approach empowers individuals and communities to take action and make the improvements they consider necessary for a fairer, more just life. Increasing inclusion for all supports our ambition for everyone to feel that they belong, can contribute and are proud to call Scotland their home.

More equal Scotland

FSAP	8. We will take action to make democratic institutions more representative of the communities they serve
FSAP	10. We will establish an Advisory Council on Women and Girls
FSAP	11. We will make sure that refugee families who settle here under Family Reunion rules can access crisis grants quickly and efficiently
FSAP	12. We will take forward the implementation of the Race Equality Framework
FSAP	13. We will review and reform gender recognition law so it is in line with international best practice for people who are Transgender or Intersex
FSAP	25. In the first year of the current parliament, we will introduce a Bill to establish domestic abuse as a specific offence

After the success of the Access to Elected Office Fund in the 2017 Scottish local authority elections, we established a Public Appointment Shadowing Placement Programme in June 2019. This programme, which helps disabled people shadow members of public body Boards, is currently supporting six disabled people. Each person is mentored by a member of the Board and has the opportunity to take part in discussions and to be involved in sub committees of the Board, the ultimate aim of which is to apply for and secure a public appointment. The Access to Elected Office Fund will be in place to support disabled candidates for the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary elections.

The National Advisory Council on Women and Girls published its first report in January 2019. The report recommendations aim to, amongst other systemic changes, influence public attitudes in Scotland to girls and women's equality and rights, improve access to justice for women and girls experiencing men's violence, and embed gender equality in all aspects of learning. We responded to these recommendations on 26 June, accepting all of them in principle, and are continuing work to take these forward.

Following a consultation in 2018 on the reform of the Gender Recognition Act, we announced in June our next steps on delivering dignity for trans men and women, including our approach to addressing the concerns raised about reform. We remain committed to taking forward gender recognition legislation in this Parliamentary session. We will publish a draft Gender Recognition (Scotland) Bill and Equality Impact Assessment by the end of 2019, and will hold a full public consultation on this draft bill. We have also set up a working group on improvements in relation to non-binary people's equality as well as a working group considering data on sex and gender.

As part of our implementation of the Race Equality Framework⁴² to tackle racism and promote race equality, we established a Working Group on Gypsy/Travellers. In October we published a joint action plan⁴³ with CoSLA outlining what actions we have taken – and the steps we will take – to protect the human rights, and improve the wellbeing and the quality of life of Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. Action includes increasing Gypsy/Travellers representation in public life and decision-making in communities as well as £2 million to improve the quality of Gypsy/Traveller sites.

To support the delivery of Family Reunion Crisis Grants, revised guidance⁴⁴ on Family Reunion Crisis Grants was published in May 2019 as part of the Scottish Welfare Fund statutory guidance.

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 commenced on 1 April 2019. The Act creates a new offence of abuse of a partner or ex-partner which enables the prosecution of a “course of conduct” of domestic abuse for the first time – enabling physical, psychological and controlling behaviour to be prosecuted at once as a single offence. A public awareness campaign highlighting that coercive and controlling behaviour is domestic abuse was launched on 1 April to coincide with the Act coming into effect.

We are supporting Close the Gap to develop the Equally Safe at Work employer accreditation programme to help employers enhance their policies and practices in order to address the barriers women face at work. The pilot programme, which launched in January 2019, will also enable employers to better support employees who have experienced gender based violence, and work towards creating an inclusive work place culture that prevents violence against women.

⁴² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-2030/>

⁴³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-lives-scotlands-gypsy-travellers-2019-2021/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-welfare-fund-statutory-guidance-2019/>

Health, including mental health

Improving the health of the nation, both physical and mental, is fundamental to helping people lead longer, healthier lives. There remain significant health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities in Scotland, and reducing these is essential to improving people's quality of life and increasing life expectancy.

Health is an enabler of social and economic participation in daily life and a key determinant of wellbeing, happiness and satisfaction. Inequalities in health are a symptom of wider social inequalities, which is why the Scottish Government sees reducing health inequalities as critical to achieving its aim of making Scotland a better, healthier place for everyone, no matter where they live. Taking a preventative approach that reduces inequalities in income, power and wealth is fundamental to improving health outcomes. That is why we are taking action to tackle alcohol, tobacco and drug consumption, while also improving levels of physical activity and supporting people to eat well and have a healthy weight. A healthy population – from our children and young people through to our older generations – is essential to creating a stronger, fairer Scotland.

Our Better Mental Health in Scotland Delivery Plan⁴⁵ is the next step in implementing our Mental Health Strategy. It sets out how we will deliver against our commitment to improve mental health in Scotland by improving access to support alongside enabling services respond to people seeking help. This is complemented by specific work to support prevention and early intervention work for children and young people's mental health across health, education and children's services.

Health support for young families

FSAP	21. Scotland's most deprived communities need additional support on health, so we will recruit at least 250 Community Links Workers to work with GP surgeries to connect people with local services and support
FSAP	22. Within the next two years, we will extend home visiting services for families with young children
FSAP	23. From 1 April 2017 coverage of the 'Childsmile' national oral health improvement programme will be extended to reach even more comparatively deprived communities
FSAP	27. As part of our support for families with children in the early years, we will introduce a Scottish Baby Box in 2017 to help reduce the costs of providing for a child in the early days and weeks of life that some families may find challenging

Our commitment to provide 500 additional health visitors by the end of 2018 was achieved, and as of June 2019 we have an additional 501.2 whole time equivalent

⁴⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/12/programme-government-delivery-plan-mental-health/documents/better-mental-health-scotland/better-mental-health-scotland/govscot%3Adocument>

health visitors in Scotland. Family Nurse Partnership are in place in 11 Health Boards, with work underway to extend this provision to Island Boards.

We have committed to have an additional 250 Community Link Workers (CLWs) in place by the end of this Parliament, and as at September 2019, we remain on track to meet this target with over 100 CLWs already in post.

Furthermore, a routine enquiry on household income in our Universal Health Visitor Pathway specifies points in time for health visitors and family nurses to ask about family finances and refer or signpost to relevant advice and services. The Universal Pathway Quality Improvement Collaborative, launched on 5 November 2019, will support health visiting teams and money advice services across Scotland to focus on income maximisation measures for families.

Scotland's Baby Box strongly signals our determination that every child, regardless of their circumstances, should get the best start in life. Baby Boxes help to tackle deprivation, improve health and support parents by ensuring that every family with a newborn has access to essential items needed in the first six months of a child's life. As of 8 November 2019 111,305 Baby Boxes have been delivered to families across Scotland since their launch in August 2017. 96% of expectant parents are now taking up the opportunity to receive a Baby Box, while the latest parent survey showed 100% satisfaction with the box and contents.

Our flagship and award winning Childsmile Programme, where nursery and schoolchildren receive regular tooth brushing instruction and fluoride varnish application, is at the leading edge of prevention-based oral health care provision. In 2017, we expanded Childsmile to ensure all children in the poorest 20% of areas in Scotland received additional fluoride varnish application. The 2019 report by the National Dental Inspection Programme shows that this has been successful in narrowing in oral health inequalities, with 80% of primary 7 children having no obvious decay experience, compared with a figure of 53% in 2005 when this data was first recorded. This successful improvement in oral health is also reflected in the number of fillings in children made in a primary care setting which show a 62% decrease since 2000-01, including a reduction of 4.6% in 2018-19 from the previous year.

Mental health

Life Chances	17. Take action to embed positive mental health approaches, based on quality evidence, in key settings where young people engage
Life Chances	18. The Scottish Government should fund applied research on school and classroom practices that encourage wellbeing and mental health

The Children and Young People's Mental Health taskforce chaired by Dr Dame Denise Coia published a set of final recommendations in July this year which are being delivered by a new group – the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Board – in partnership with CoSLA. A priority for the new Board is to successfully put in place new and effective community wellbeing support services. Children and young people aged five to 24 and their families can self-refer to these services in order to access flexible support to meet their needs. The Programme Board is also working to ensure children, young people and their parents can get support and access services both on a community basis and in a crisis anytime, anywhere. A 24/7 telephone and text service will be rolled out across Scotland to enhance our crisis response.

We have committed to ensure that every secondary school in Scotland has access to a school counsellor, with 350 counsellors available by September 2020. Additionally, a Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Working Group has been established to collaboratively support our work to provide more than 80 additional counsellors in further and higher education over the next four years, supported by investment of around £20 million.

We are also working towards meeting our target of having an additional 250 school nurses in place by 2022 with the training of 50 additional staff starting this year. Further tranches will follow until 2022 alongside ensuring that teachers across every school are offered training in mental health first aid.

Last year, we increased our funding by an additional £4 million for 80 new staff for the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services. In addition, action 15 of our Mental Health Strategy outlines the Scottish Government's commitment to funding 800 additional mental health workers in key settings, including A&E, GP practices, police station custody suites, and prisons. This ensures that local provision and support is at the heart of our plans, with funding for this work increasing to £35 million in 2021-22. As of 1 October 2019, 327.5 additional staff were employed.

In 2018, we launched a three year National Trauma Training Programme to support our commitment to develop a trauma and adversity informed workforce and services across Scotland. There has been huge demand for training with over 3,000 workers being trained within the first year, supported by a range of universally available trauma training resources published by NHS Education for Scotland, including tailored resources specifically for anyone working with Children and Young People⁴⁶. Service Level Agreements are in place with Health Boards for specialist training supervision and coaching, and £120,000 dedicated funding is supporting three local delivery trials underway in Glasgow, Midlothian, and Argyll and Bute.

⁴⁶ <https://vimeo.com/334642616>

Other actions

Collaboration is often required across a number of areas to make progress on tackling poverty and reducing inequalities, reflecting the cross-cutting nature of the efforts to make Scotland fairer. The issues on which updates are provided in the this section are clear examples of Scottish Government activity which cut across a number of the themes, such as those on public service delivery, public sector reform and inclusive growth. While these updates support the following actions and recommendations across the reports, they also contribute to many other themes already covered in this progress report.

Broadband

FSAP	6. We will deliver 100% superfast broadband access by 2021, helping low income households reduce costs
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We have committed to superfast broadband for every home and business in Scotland, and are working over the coming year to establish the Scotland 5G Centre. To address the inequality that comes with being more digitally excluded, we have provided £1 million in 2019-20 for our Digital Start Fund to help more disadvantaged people develop their digital skills, enhance their job prospects and connect them with other people.

Inclusive growth

Life Chances	11. Do more to disseminate models of good practice on inclusive growth
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Scotland's Centre for Regional Inclusive Growth (SCRIG) was launched by the Scottish Government in July 2018 to support and enable the delivery of inclusive growth across Scotland. SCRIG works across government, industry and academia to provide access to toolkits and data, research and examples of good practice that support the delivery of more inclusive economic outcomes. It also delivers an inclusive growth 'community of practice' in partnership with Economic Development Association Scotland which brings together public, private and third sector partners to share lessons and experience of how to deliver inclusive growth on the ground.

Justice

FSAP	24. We will make better use of community-based interventions to reduce re-offending further and to help people move on from offending
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The presumption against short periods of imprisonment was extended to 12 months or less over the summer following Parliamentary scrutiny and approval. This move will help mitigate the detrimental impact of short periods of imprisonment by instead better supporting the rehabilitation of individuals who have offended and prevent reoffending. In addition, the new Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019⁴⁷

⁴⁷ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/14/contents/enacted>

was completed which will allow for expansion of electronic monitoring to cover a wider range of orders and licences in the community and help prevent re-offending.

The Scottish Violence Reduction Unit’s Street and Arrow initiative provides training, mentoring and paid employment to address and support the needs of people with a criminal record who have made a commitment to move away from their chaotic violent lifestyles. The catering contract within Glasgow Dental Hospital secured through this initiative in August 2018 is expected to run for five years. It will enable more people with histories of violence a chance to transform their lives whilst contributing towards local economic development, supporting the individuals involved, their families and communities.

A national Community Justice Leadership Group, co-chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and CoSLA, was established in August 2019 to drive action to improve the delivery of community justice services across Scotland. A sustained focus on prevention and effective interventions in Scotland has helped ensure reconviction rates remain at a 20 year low.

Public sector reform and public service delivery

FSAP	9. We will reform public services to deliver the highest quality service to users, with dignity and respect at their core
StC	14. Ensure that public service delivery is respectful, person-centred and preserves the dignity of people in poverty: pre-employment and in-service training should include the importance of avoiding stigma and developing understanding of the challenges of living on a very low income

Public service reform sets out an expectation that our public services are better able to focus on supporting improved outcomes for all, especially those whose life chances and wellbeing are poorest. To support this aim, the Scottish Leaders Forum (SLF) relaunched in June 2019 with a programme of activity to inspire and challenge senior leaders in driving long term public service transformation. SLF Action Groups formed subsequently are now testing new, innovative approaches to key policy challenges, including how leaders can strategically tackle child poverty, how public service systems can promote diversity and improve minority ethnic employment, and how values such as kindness and openness can be embedded in our public services. Discussions with Action Groups on addressing these challenges formed a major part of the latest SLF event in November.

We are committed to delivering our new public services in a way which is respectful and preserves the dignity of those accessing support. Fair Start Scotland, the cornerstone of our devolved employability support, is a voluntary service which participants can access without fear of sanctions. The service will offer high quality employment support to a minimum of 38,000 unemployed people who want to work and need help to enter and/or remain in the labour market.

Social Security Scotland, our devolved social security agency is built on firm foundations which put dignity and respect at the forefront of service delivery. We created our Charter with people with lived experience of the social security system,

setting out what they should expect from the new system. This reinforces how we will make sure that we are taking a human rights based approach to what we do and how we will demonstrate dignity, fairness and respect in all our actions.

In addition to the induction for all new entrants from April 2019, the Learning and Development Team within Social Security Scotland has designed and delivered Charter Training, the objective of which is to embed respect for the dignity of individuals, ensuring it is at the heart of the Scottish Social Security system. Poverty awareness training has been incorporated into the learning routeway for all new entrants from May 2019, aimed at increasing awareness of stigma associated with living in poverty and providing skills to challenge low income stigma. Other training sessions have involved input from external stakeholders, such as that by One Parent Families Scotland for the Best Start Grant (from May 2019) and Sands Lothian for the Funeral Support Payment learning from August 2019 to increase awareness of the challenges faced by clients in order to provide a service that is respectful and person-centred.

Transport

FSAP	41. Transport Scotland is working with Young Scot to make the National Entitlement Card smart ready for 11-25 year olds
Life Chances	12. Do more to provide subsidised/free transport for young people aged 25 and under

The Young Scot National Entitlement Card is now smart enabled, and provides discounted travel on both bus and rail for card holders aged 16-18. Transport Scotland continues to work with local authorities and Young Scot to introduce targeted regional concessions that address barriers to accessing transport, such as Renfrewshire’s Through Care scheme (launched in 2017), the Falkirk Looked After scheme and the Youth Attainment Holiday scheme in North Lanarkshire (both launched in 2019). From May 2019 Young Scot discounts for certain tickets can be applied to Smartcards, including Young Scot cards, at ScotRail booking offices and online.

ScotRail offers ‘tickets for travel to interview’ for jobseekers to obtain up to two free return tickets per month to attend interviews. Where a jobseeker secures employment, they can also apply for a ticket for free travel for a month. To help support people getting back into work, there is the UK-wide Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card which provides people who are unemployed and claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance or Universal Credit with a 50% discount on selected rail tickets.

We continue to provide £54.2 million in 2019-20 through the Bus Service Operators Grant to subsidise all bus services across Scotland, helping to keep bus fares lower than they would be otherwise. As part of the commitment to invest over £500 million in bus priority infrastructure, we are also developing the Bus Partnership Fund for local authorities, the detail of which will be set out in early 2020. The fund will further improve bus services and support implementation of the bus partnership provisions in the Transport (Scotland) Bill 2019.

On 27 November 2019 we launched a three month pilot to provide free bus travel for modern apprentices in Shetland, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. The aim of this pilot is to better understand the impact free bus travel would have in supporting modern apprentices aged 16-18 and those in the first year of their apprenticeship with the costs they incur when accessing training and travelling to work.

In autumn 2019 we established a working group to review the merits of extending public transport concessions to people under the age of 26. Our review of concessionary fares seeks to address a number of commitments, including those stemming from the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan. Officials will continue to work closely with stakeholders to explore how all areas of transport, including travel concession schemes, can best support the delivery of the child poverty reduction targets. We are also working to extend the concessionary travel scheme during the course of next year to include recipients of the Young Carer Grant and companions of disabled children under five years of age.

Progress at a glance

This table provides a quick overview of the progress made on each of the actions and recommendations across the three separate reports. It indicates whether the policy:

- is at an early stage of development
- is in progress
- has been completed, or
- is one of continuous development where we will carry on pushing for improvements and making changes.

Fairer Scotland Action Plan actions	Status
1. In 2017, we will introduce a new socio-economic duty on public bodies	Completed
2. We will provide £100,000 new funding so that, across Scotland, people with experience of living in poverty can speak out, tackle stigma and push for change to public services	Completed
3. Building on the work of local Fairness and Poverty Commissions, we will establish a national Poverty and Inequality Commission in 2017/18	Completed
4. We will launch a new £29 million programme, including £12.5 million from the European Social Fund, to tackle poverty in Scotland	Completed
5. We will take action to tackle the poverty premium	In progress
6. We will deliver 100% superfast broadband access by 2021, helping low income households reduce costs	In progress
7. We will do more to help people to have a say in their local areas	Continuous programme of work
8. We will take action to make democratic institutions more representative of the communities they serve	In progress
9. We will reform public services to deliver the highest quality service to users, with dignity and respect at their core	In progress
10. We will establish an Advisory Council on Women and Girls	Completed
11. We will make sure that refugee families who settle here under Family Reunion rules can access crisis grants quickly and efficiently	Completed
12. We will take forward the implementation of the Race Equality Framework	In progress
13. We will review and reform gender recognition law so it is in line with international best practice for people who are Transgender or Intersex	In progress
14. We will deliver more warm and affordable homes in this parliament	In progress
15. We will deliver improved services for tenants in the private rented sector (PRS) in 2018	Completed
16. We will build on Scotland's world-leading homelessness rights	Continuous programme of work
17. We will make social security fairer where we can	Continuous programme of work
18. We will do more to help carers as soon as we have the ability	Completed
19. We will work with a range of partners to help people claim the benefits they are entitled to	In progress
20. Over the term of this parliament, we will work to make Scotland a Good Food Nation by enabling more people to have access to affordable, healthy, nutritious food, in a dignified way	In progress
21. Scotland's most deprived communities need additional support on health, so we will recruit at least 250 Community Links Workers to work with GP surgeries to connect people with local services and support	In progress
22. Within the next two years, we will extend home visiting services for families with young children	Completed

23. From 1 April 2017 coverage of the 'Childsmile' national oral health improvement programme will be extended to reach even more comparatively deprived communities	In progress
24. We will make better use of community-based interventions to reduce re-offending further and to help people move on from offending	Continuous programme of work
25. In the first year of the current parliament, we will introduce a Bill to establish domestic abuse as a specific offence	Completed
26. In early 2017, we will introduce a new Child Poverty Bill	Completed
27. As part of our support for families with children in the early years, we will introduce a Scottish Baby Box in 2017 to help reduce the costs of providing for a child in the early days and weeks of life that some families may find challenging	Completed
28. We will create a new Best Start Grant (BSG) to bring together the system for Healthy Start food vouchers and the UK Sure Start Maternity Grant (SSMG) when powers transfer to Scottish Ministers, as part of our focus on reducing inequalities in early years, and subject to the outcome of the consultation on the Future of Social Security in Scotland	Completed
29. By 2020, entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) will almost double for all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as those 2 year olds that stand to benefit most, to 1140 hours per year (from current levels of 600 hours per year)	In progress
30. We will take action to reduce the costs of school for low income parents	Continuous programme of work
31. From April 2017, our proposed reforms will make the current Council Tax system fairer for low income families	In progress
32. By 2018, we will ensure that every nursery in our most deprived areas has an additional qualified teacher or childcare graduate	In progress
33. We are committed to making real progress in closing the attainment gap during the lifetime of this Parliament and to eliminate it, as far as we can, over the next decade	Continuous programme of work
34. We will do more to address bullying in schools – including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying	In progress
35. We will tackle poverty directly for some of our most vulnerable children by delivering parity of child allowances between kinship and foster carers	Completed
36. We will take action to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021	Completed
37. We will significantly increase the numbers of young people getting industry experience while still at school to help them kick-start a successful career in their chosen field	In progress
38. We will take action to widen access to university: our ambition is that any child born today should have an equal chance of entering university, no matter what their socio-economic background is	Continuous programme of work
39. We will introduce a Job Grant for young people aged 16-24 who have been out of work for six months or more	In progress
40. We will ensure that support for housing costs is not taken away from young people aged 18-21	Completed

41. Transport Scotland is working with Young Scot to make the National Entitlement Card smart ready for 11-25 year olds	Completed
42. We will do more to promote the Living Wage	Continuous programme of work
43. We will do more to help people in Scotland work flexibly	Continuous programme of work
44. We will improve employment services for disabled people	Continuous programme of work
45. By the end of 2016, we will launch a pilot 'Returners' project to help bring experienced women back into the workplace after a career break	In progress
46. We will tackle discrimination on pregnancy and maternity leave in the workplace	Continuous programme of work
47. We will help those older people who want to keep working after they have reached state pension age	In progress
48. We will help older people claim the financial support they are entitled to	In progress
49. Our planned reforms to council tax will protect older people on low incomes	Completed
50. We will improve the current system of Funeral Payments, so it helps more people, is more predictable and provides help more quickly	Completed

Shifting the Curve recommendations	Status
1. Build on Living Wage Accreditation – a focus on larger employers, and on incentives, would be useful	Continuous programme of work
2. Encourage pay ratio disclosure as a way of tackling pay inequality	Continuous programme of work
3. Ensure childcare commitments focus on quality to improve outcomes, and consider providing a limited number of free hours of childcare for primary school aged children	In progress
4. Make family flexible working more explicit within the Business Pledge, and consider whether approaches such as the Timewise programme could promote flexible working in Scotland	In progress
5. Do more to ensure that people claim the benefits they are entitled to	In progress
6. Make effective use of new social security powers but proceed with caution	Continuous programme of work
7. Build more social housing	In progress
8. Ensure fuel poverty programmes are focused to support those on low incomes, and do more to tackle the poverty premium in home energy costs	In progress
9. Be bold on local tax reform	In progress
10. Carry out a comprehensive review of the policies and services relevant to the life chances of older children and young adults, with particular emphasis on young people from poorer backgrounds	Completed
11. Reduce the number of government-supported employment programmes targeting this group of young people and simplify the landscape, to provide a clearer, sharper focus	In progress
12. Ensure that the new approach to employer engagement in education is having an impact on improving skills for work of young people	In progress
13. Do more to tackle occupational segregation	Continuous programme of work
14. Ensure that public service delivery is respectful, person-centred and preserves the dignity of people in poverty: pre-employment and in-service training should include the importance of avoiding stigma and developing understanding of the challenges of living on a very low income	In progress
15. Commence the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act 2010, when powers are available to do so	Completed

The Life Chances of Young People in Scotland recommendations	Status
1. Develop new advice provision for young people, supported by a skilled, trained workforce	Early stages of delivery
2. Continue work to improve data collection and sharing to track post school participation in learning, training and work for young people and make better use of that information to improve service delivery and develop Scottish Government policy	Continuous programme of work
3. Do more to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Developing the Young Workforce regional groups in building systematic engagement between local employers and schools and colleges on local and regional skills shortages	Continuous programme of work
4. Do more to value non-academic learning routes, post-school	Continuous programme of work
5. The Scottish Government should, through the 15-24 Learner Journey Review, ensure our FE and HE systems have more flex built in so young people can shift between routes	Early stages of delivery
6. Employers need to think about 'job design' and recruitment processes that are free from bias and that match requirements for the job with the skill level needed to make applications	In progress
7. All post-school internships should be advertised and every post-school intern should get paid	Completed
8. Raise concerns with DWP about the quality of support offered to young people in Jobcentre Plus	Completed
9. Lobby the UK Government about exploitative zero hour contracts	In progress
10. Lobby the UK Government on the need for the National Living Wage to apply to all those over 18 years old	In progress
11. Do more to disseminate models of good practice on inclusive growth	Continuous programme of work
12. Do more to provide subsidised/free transport for young people aged 25 and under	In progress
13. Improve housing advice for young people	Completed
14. Deliver more affordable housing options for young adults	In progress
15. Ensure that tenants and landlords understand the arrangements for enforcing private rented sector regulations, and that monitoring is in place to make sure the new arrangements work as intended	In progress
16. Encourage social landlords to make the social sector easier for young people to access	In progress
17. Take action to embed positive mental health approaches, based on quality evidence, in key settings where young people engage	In progress
18. The Scottish Government should fund applied research on school and classroom practices that encourage wellbeing and mental health	In progress

Fairness Pledge updates

We know that the Scottish Government cannot eradicate poverty and inequality on its own and that a collective effort is required with partners across the sector and beyond to build a Fairer Scotland. As such, our Fairer Scotland Action Plan contains Fairness Pledges from organisations who are committed to working together with us to realise this vision. This year, we have invited these organisations to set out the work they are doing that not only helps deliver on the Fairer Scotland Action Plans actions but also helps address the recommendations in Shifting the Curve and the Life Chances of Young People in Scotland.

The Carnegie UK Trust pledged to work to improve access to affordable credit.

The Trust has continued to deliver a significant programme of work this year, collaborating with governments, charities, regulators and affordable credit providers across Scotland and throughout the UK to make more affordable credit available to those who need it.

Seven local authorities – Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Clackmannanshire, Moray, North Lanarkshire, Perth and Kinross, and Stirling – have signed up to work with us on a new study to map the supply and demand for credit in each of their localities. We look forward to publishing the findings soon. We will also soon publish the results of our study into the financial investments required to substantially grow the UK's personal lending CDFI sector.

At national level, we were delighted to be hosted by Linda Fabiani MSP at a reception in the Scottish Parliament to celebrate the work of our credit union consortium, comprising East Kilbride Credit Union, Castle Community Bank, Kingdom Community Bank, 1st Alliance (Ayrshire) Credit Union and West Lothian Credit Union. The five credit unions are working together to increase the number of businesses offering savings and loans to employees via payroll. Cabinet Secretary Aileen Campbell MSP addressed the event.

Our Affordable Credit Action Group, led by the Very Reverend John Chalmers, continues to provide strategic oversight of our work in this area and we have been pleased to widen membership of the group this year, welcoming representatives from Money Advice Scotland, the Money and Pensions Service, Glasgow Caledonian University and the Financial Conduct Authority.

Our Affordable Credit Loan Fund, jointly backed by the Trust and the Scottish Government, has made a £500,000 investment in the online affordable credit provider Fair For You, supporting them to extend their services across Scotland. At UK level, we have worked closely throughout the year with Fair For All Finance, the new body established to distribute dormant bank accounts monies to advance affordable credit. There will be significant learning and impact of this model for affordable credit providers across the UK, including in Scotland.

Corra Foundation (previously known as Lloyds TSB Foundation For Scotland) pledged to help the Scottish Government support innovative approaches to

tackling poverty and deprivation. As well as continuing to be a thoughtful grant-maker, they would work differently to reach the communities that historically have accessed very little charitable funding.

Over the past 12 months Corra Foundation has continued its commitment to promote fairness and growth of aspirations which improve quality of life for people in Scotland. Corra Foundation has strengthened its capacity to analyse the wealth of data and insights collated from the charities and communities it works alongside to better understand the challenges, as well as the opportunities for change, that contribute to a fairer Scotland.

Getting alongside communities

Corra Foundation works alongside nine communities, each identified as areas where traditional grant-making has not reached. Corra engages with local people and partners to understand the shared vision and support the change that matters to the community, including:

- Supporting local people to have their voices heard in decisions that affect their community. For instance, community members' involvement in Local Governance Review Democracy Matters conversations and Participatory budgeting groups; an opportunity for local people to have their say on how money is spent in their area.
- Supporting communities to participate in and take the lead on Community Action Plans.
- Getting alongside local people to support them to turn their ideas into action, including an upcycling school uniform project, food shares, parent and toddler groups and creative art sessions. Between January to September 2019, 23 ideas had been developed by community members.
- Over 1,400 hours of support has been provided by community members in their local areas helping and supporting change.
- Celebrating community action and place-based approaches at Corra's People in Place Scottish Parliament Reception⁴⁸ in September, which highlighted the importance of local people driving positive change.

Appetite for Change

- The Appetite for Change⁴⁹ strand of Corra's People in Place programme is progressing well with people in Fort William and Lochaber designing a project model to support ideas and action in their community.
- Participatory Scotland is a new initiative in partnership with Participatory City Foundation. The aim is to work collaboratively with local authorities and other partners in each place to support the development of a more engaged, active and socially connected population.

⁴⁸ <https://www.corra.scot/blogs/peopleinplace-scottish-parliament-reception/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.corra.scot/appetite-for-change/>

Grant making

- The importance of listening to applicant and funded organisations is critical to Corra's grant making. In 2019 a customer satisfaction survey was conducted inviting all applicants and funded organisations to inform Corra's processes.
- Loneliness and isolation continue to be key themes amongst grant applications. During the past 12 months over 43% of Corra's grant making supported the reduction in isolation and 29% reducing inequalities.
- Corra is committed to learning from the insights of the people and charities working to create positive change. Corra's recent poverty insight briefing⁵⁰ highlights key learning gathered from the organisations and communities Corra works alongside, including challenges created by social security sanctions and the importance of tackling the stigma associated with poverty.
- Corra – in collaboration with the National Lottery Community Fund, Comic Relief, The Gannochy Trust and William Grant Foundation – have developed The Listening Fund which launched earlier in 2019. The fund aims to support charities to listen and respond to the needs and experiences of children and young people, so that they can enjoy their rights to be heard and involved in the decisions that affect their lives.

Dundee City Council pledged that all recommendations of the Dundee Fairness Commission will be taken forward.

The independent Cost of the School Day Project facilitated by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland is entering its final phase in Dundee. Its exit strategy is designed to enable local education leaders to mainstream this approach as a permanent aspect of planning and the day to day life of the school. An external evaluation undertaken by NHS Health Scotland has found that the work in Dundee has led to positive practice changes at school level, policy changes at local authority level, improvements in awareness, understanding and attitudes towards poverty, and contributed to positive short and medium term outcomes for children.

A third Dundee Fairness Commission has been recruited to continue the model that ran from June 2017 to October 2018. Community members of the previous commission are being supported to develop a new role that will enable them to continue to campaign for improved services and quality of life for those struggling against poverty. They have also provided support and guidance to members and organisers of several other poverty truth commission style groups which have been established in other local authorities across Scotland.

Other notable Dundee Fairness Action Plan achievements include:

- the establishment of a Drug Commission. This investigated the causes and impact of the high levels of drug-related deaths in the city and produced a hard-hitting series of recommendations on how local systems and services could be improved. Central to the Drug Commission's work was the extensive involvement of people with lived experience, their families and carers and members of local communities.

⁵⁰ <https://www.corra.scot/insight-briefing-poverty-october-2019/>

- Achieving accreditation as the UK's first Living Wage City, setting ambitious targets for the number of local employers becoming living wage employers and the number of employees who will benefit from uplifts in wage levels.

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

Inclusion Scotland has been very active in promoting disabled people's employment, both in terms of policy and through delivery of our "We Can Work" living wage internship programme. On policy, we have been actively involved in work to progress the Scottish Government's Disability Employment Gap Action Plan. We continue to deliver up to 30 internships places for disabled people, supporting employers with inclusive job design and recruitment processes, in a wide variety of public and third sector organisations, and are now rolling out the programme to private sector employers. Latest figures show that 76% of our interns have gone into full-time employment in their preferred fields. Our work with the Scottish Government's Graduate Development Programme has resulted in the astonishing statistic of 62% of this year's graduate intake being disabled people – a huge endorsement of the work of our internship programme and follow up support and advice.

The need for more accessible housing is of fundamental importance to disabled people, given the current shortage. Our argument that 'Housing for Varying Needs' (the design standard for grant-funded social housing) is now 20 years old and needs updating has been accepted and there will be a wholesale review. Following our work to promote the development of a single cross tenure design and space standard in Scotland, 'Housing to 2040', the Scottish Government's draft vision for housing and communities now includes a principle that tenure-neutral space and quality standards for new homes (and existing homes where possible) should be set specifically to improve and protect quality of living and of place. We have achieved improvements to Scottish Government guidance on regulations we hope will be laid in the Scottish Parliament by the end of the year that will improve the experience of disabled people needing to adapt a common part of their home. We also gave evidence to the Infrastructure Commission to ensure that accessible housing and funding and improved systems for adaptations are considered in any 30 year infrastructure plan.

We have continued to work to ensure that lived experience is central to the development of policy. Our Poverty and Social Security Panel met with the Cabinet Secretary to give their views on the Disability Assistance policy consultation. We have continued to be involved in stakeholder groups, including one working with Social Security Scotland to embed inclusive communications into the agency's work. We were delighted that the People-Led Policy Panel (PLPP) model developed by Inclusion Scotland was drawn upon to develop the Social Security Charter, and then again for developing a framework for monitoring and evaluating whether expectations in the Charter are being met. Our PLPP on social care support worked with officials and others to co-produce a vision for social care and work-streams for the reform of Adult Social Care. Meanwhile, at local level, our Localisation and Empowerment project in the Highlands has supported the establishment of a

Disability Highland Community of Practice and their efforts to establish a Highland-wide Disabled People's Organisation.

The Access to Elected Office Fund, a model designed and delivered by Inclusion Scotland and that has attracted international interest, has been gearing up to support disabled candidates in the 2021 Scottish Parliament election. This aims to ensure lived experience is central to policy by supporting more disabled people to become politicians and policy-makers themselves.

Through the involvement of our CEO in the Poverty and Inequality Commission until its replacement with a statutory body, we helped to ensure that the particularly high incidence of child poverty among households with a disabled parent and child informed work on child poverty and that access issues were considered in other strands of its work e.g. transport. The welcome news on the Scottish Child Payment, which the Commission had pushed for, may in the longer term provide a vehicle through which to target additional funds to such households and others with particularly high incidences of child poverty.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation pledged to set out their strategy to solve poverty in common with the Fairer Scotland Action Plan through a range of actions.

JRF is supporting the direct participation of people with experience of poverty, as well as continuing to publish independent research evidence on the changing face of poverty in Scotland and across the UK. This year, we have supported the work of the Poverty Truth Community and are involved closely in the work of Edinburgh Poverty Commission and North Ayrshire's Fair for All Commission. JRF is committed to finding more effective ways to talk about poverty, in order to build the public and political will to solve it. To that end, we hosted a Framing for Influence event in Glasgow for grassroots organisation and campaigners making use of the framing toolkit⁵¹ developed with The Frameworks Institute.

Our work to build solutions to poverty will focus on the three 'anchors' of housing, social security and work – similar to the key drivers in the Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, 'Every Child, Every Chance'. To mark Challenge Poverty Week, where we partner with Poverty Alliance, we published Poverty in Scotland 2019⁵² which analysed trends in poverty over the 20 years of devolution. Against a backdrop of poverty levels rising again after an earlier phase of progress, the report highlights the contribution of housing, and in particular social rents, to Scotland's substantially lower child poverty rate than in the rest of the UK. On social security, JRF formed a partnership with IPPR Scotland to explore how the new Scottish Child Payment can be shaped to drive poverty rates lower. Our findings⁵³ have been shaped by the experiences of low-income families. Our research on the roll-out of Universal Credit in Glasgow will be published early in 2020. We have also published research⁵⁴ from Strathclyde Business School on influencing employers to tackle in-work poverty.

⁵¹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/framing-toolkit-talking-about-poverty>

⁵² <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2019>

⁵³ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/making-most-scottish-child-payment>

⁵⁴ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/influencing-employers-so-more-people-break-free-poverty-through-work>

We are continuing our social investment work in Scotland as we pledged in 2016. JRF is part of the Fair by Design⁵⁵ coalition which aims to end the poverty premium in key goods and services within a decade. This includes supporting Fair For You⁵⁶ which targets the high-cost rent-to-buy market by offering white goods and home essentials at an affordable price, saving customers more than £500 on average per item. This is a GB-wide service proving popular in Scotland, in part due to remote and rural areas having the same access and costs as urban areas. In a similar way, we are investing to tackle high-cost credit by partnering with the Scottish Government, Carnegie UK Trust and Social Investment Scotland to boost access to affordable loans for low-income households.

NHS Health Scotland pledged to help the Scottish Government in its ambition to end child poverty in Scotland

NHS Health Scotland has been working to support NHS and local authority partners in the development of local child poverty action reports, both as a 'critical friend' and through leadership of the Local Child Poverty Coordination Group. This group comprises national partners, including the Improvement Service, Scottish Government, Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) and CoSLA, to provide coordination of a joint plan of local support and to facilitate two-way engagement between local and national partners.

We have continued to support the further development of financial inclusion pathways between midwifery, health visiting and welfare/money advice services. This includes producing a 'Raising the issue of money' resource aimed at showing how these staff can talk about money with the pregnant women and families they work with; supporting the Universal Pathway for Health Visiting Quality Improvement Collaborative on financial inclusion, and co-hosting a conference with the Improvement Service on the benefits of setting up welfare advice and health partnerships.

Our Facing Up to Child Poverty in School Practice Network is offering a peer support and learning forum to strengthen local partnership action on cost barriers of school. We have also commissioned an evaluation of the Cost of the School Day programme which will be published in early 2020.

We have collaborated with the Poverty Alliance to develop a Challenging Poverty Stigma and Discrimination digital learning hub to specifically support public service managers to bring about change in their organisations, teams and where appropriate, their partners to be launched in February 2020.

Alongside our work to specifically help the Scottish Government tackle child poverty, NHS Health Scotland has a number of other work strands which support a wide range of further ambitions in the Fairer Scotland Action Plan.

⁵⁵ <http://www.fairbydesignfund.com/>

⁵⁶ <https://www.fairforyou.co.uk/>

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy has stalled across all socio-economic groups and in our poorest areas it has actually decreased. This means that health inequalities are worsening and that socioeconomic position is increasingly impacting on how long we live for, and how long we live in good health. Trends like this have not been seen for decades and are not inevitable. The best evidence currently available⁵⁷ suggests that this is due to austerity and that pressures on health and social care services are also contributing. We are leading a programme of research and collaboration across the UK to identify what needs to be done now at a UK level, at a national level in Scotland and at a local level.

Health Inequalities

We are leading the Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) Informing Interventions to reduce health Inequalities (Triple I) project that brings together robust evidence to estimate the potential population health impact of specific interventions. The tool was used to compare the impact of income-based policies on health and health inequalities. The report⁵⁸ suggests that selected income-based policies could improve health and narrow health inequalities in Scotland. These policies include: increasing means-tested benefits by 50%; introducing illustrative Citizen's Basic Income (CBI) schemes that incorporate increases to Income Tax rates; and increasing devolved benefits by 50% and introducing a 'real' Living Wage. It shows the most effective income-based policies for reducing health inequalities are likely to be those that disproportionately increase incomes for those with the lowest incomes.

Social Security/Benefits

We provided written evidence⁵⁹ to the Scottish Affairs Committee inquiry into the impact of welfare policy in Scotland where we highlighted concerns that this policy is contributing to poor health outcomes and health inequalities in Scotland. We made a series of recommendations to protect population health and reduce health inequalities in Scotland, including abolishing the five week wait for Universal Credit, removing the benefit cap and the two child limit, abolishing benefit sanctions for all, and supporting a rights-based approach to social security, informed by the experiences of people who use the system.

Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)

We have been supporting the expansion of ELC by undertaking an evaluability assessment, developing an evaluation framework and support to the actual evaluation. We have also produced two rapid evidence briefings: one looking at the

⁵⁷ <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/publications/reports-and-papers/recent-adverse-mortality-trends-in-scotland/>

⁵⁸ Richardson E, et al. Income-based policies in Scotland: how would they affect health and health inequalities? Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland; 2018

⁵⁹ <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/scottish-affairs-committee/welfare-policy-in-scotland/written/104175.pdf>

likely impact on parents of their preschool children attending ELC⁶⁰ and the other on impacts for the child⁶¹.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We are developing a public health response to improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing to ensure that an inequalities and rights based approach underpins discussions. This is being informed by a series of consultative events, a policy and legislation mapping, and the establishment of a national collaborative with partners in health and social care, community and learning development, first responders including Police Scotland, and stakeholders with a public health focus. We are also creating opportunities for authentic engagement with children and young people to influence activities. This includes the production of a short film exploring the themes of relationships, children's rights and trauma sensitive approaches using education settings as an example of how these themes can be applied.

The Poverty Truth Community pledged to ensure that people experiencing poverty are at the heart of work to overcome it.

The Poverty Truth Community (formerly Poverty Truth Commission) has continued to work to ensure that people experiencing poverty are at the heart of work to overcome it. Our work has moved beyond the commission model and our change of name reflects this new way of working – creating a movement for change led by people experiencing poverty.

Community members are involved in working, speaking, writing and research at a local, national and international level – working to ensure full participation of people experiencing poverty, not just consultation.

As a Community we have also agreed three new areas of work after hearing new stories, starting new conversations, and working together with people within positions of influence:

1. Poverty and young people
2. Poverty and universal credit
3. Poverty and work.

We continue to talk with and support the new PTC style conversations across Scotland. As part of this, we were involved in a roundtable discussion in March this year which enabled us to share learning across all of the PTCs and discuss the best ways in which those with lived experience can be supported to push for real change. We came together again in November to discuss themes that are emerging in each PTC, commonalities that exist and how the PTC-style conversations can support work to address these issues.

⁶⁰ <http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/1786/provision-of-early-learning-and-childcare-and-parents-outcomes-an-evidence-brief.pdf>

⁶¹ Scobie G and Scott E. Rapid evidence review: Childcare quality and children's outcomes. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland; 2017.

The Prince's Trust Scotland pledged to expand Mosaic, their new mentoring programme for BME young people who are growing up in the most deprived communities.

The Prince's Trust Scotland worked with 8,000 new young people in 2018-19 who faced significant barriers and disadvantage in accessing education, training and employment opportunities. Overall 75% of all supported young people achieved a positive destination with 48% moving into work, 29% either staying in or moving into education and 8% pursuing volunteering.

Youth Employment

We pledge to continue prioritising the delivery of employability programmes in collaboration with our network of corporate and public sector partners that help to mitigate employment barriers for disadvantaged young people.

We pledge to further develop in school opportunities for school age young people to meet relatable role models and mentors from industry and have career focussed experiences to help them kick start successful careers.

Building on our successful, innovative partnership in Ayrshire we pledge to continue to develop our working relationships with the network of Regional DYW groups and help sustain systematic engagement between schools, colleges, the third sector and employers.

In 2018-19 we worked with 532 young people through our employability programmes. Of these:

- 52% were female, 46% were male.
- 6% were care leavers
- 25% had a disability
- 27% had mental health needs
- 68% secured a positive destination

Education

We pledge to continue our work providing alternative learning experiences for young people struggling at school through our school-based programme, Achieve. Our programme improves wellbeing, builds core competencies and meta-skills while improving attainment through alternative qualifications.

In 2018-19 we worked with 2,000 young people in school through our Achieve programme. Of these:

- 7% were care leavers
- 7% were young offenders
- 29% had a disability
- 24% had mental health needs

The national pass rate for our Prince's Trust Personal Development and Employability Skills Qualification was 93%, with 91% of the young people we worked with moving onto positive destinations.

Housing

We pledge to continue to support and signpost all young people we work with to the correct support services if they are facing homelessness or issues with housing. In 2018-19 we worked with at least 500 young people who said they were homeless.

Social Security

We pledge to promote the new benefits available, namely Job Grant and Young Carers Grant, to the young people we work with, and ensure that our own CashBack Development Awards complement and don't duplicate these benefits. We gave out over 1,200 Development Awards in 2018-19 which helped remove financial barriers for disadvantaged young people and helped secure 83% positive destinations.

Equality

We pledge to continue to develop Mosaic, our mentoring programme for BME young people who are growing up in the most deprived communities in Glasgow. In 2018-19 around 8% of all young people we worked with came from a BME or mixed ethnic background.

Health and Mental Health

We pledge to continue to support the needs of young people facing mental health challenges. This year we have upskilled and trained our frontline staff in Mental Health First Aid. We also pledge to continue our pilot counselling support service in our Glasgow office and to explore opportunities to roll this out to our Dundee and Edinburgh centres. Over 25% of all young people we worked with 2018-19 self-identify as having mental health support needs and 29% had a disability.

Justice

We pledge to continue to focus our support on early intervention initiatives and help divert young people away from risk-taking behaviours and criminal activity. We also pledge to stand by our ethos of 'No Judgement' and help those with convictions move on from offending and find employment opportunities. In 2018-19 we supported at least 500 young people with previous convictions.

Timewise and Family Friendly Working Scotland (part of Working Families) pledged to produce the first ever Flexible Jobs Index for Scotland and to encourage employers to adapt to flexible recruitment

The Index, produced by both Timewise and Family Friendly Working Scotland was completed in 2017.

Timewise has committed to producing an updated Flexible Jobs Index for Scotland in 2020. This will provide a new benchmark for Scotland of the ratio of quality jobs advertised as open to flexible or part-time working and indicate whether employers are applying flexible working to the hire process.

Family Friendly Working Scotland continues to encourage employers to adapt to flexible recruitment on an ongoing basis, supporting Scottish employers to use the 'Happy to Talk Flexible Working' strapline and logo and showcasing Scottish employers who are recruiting flexibly and reaping the benefits on its website.

Timewise has also been commissioned by the Scottish Government to undertake a feasibility study in 2019-20 to prototype a 'Fair Flexible Work' programme in Scotland. The initiative is looking to support and scale approaches to reducing child poverty and tackling the gender pay gap by unlocking fair flexible work and better support for parents to find and progress into quality flexible jobs.

Working with a wide range of Scottish partners, the programme aims to:

- Stimulate employer action to change recruitment practices and increase vacancies at all levels offering flexibility and part-time.
- Enable more parents and carers to find quality flexible work in order to raise their living standards and progress their careers.

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

Virgin Money is a committed member of Business in the Community (BITC) Scotland. Through BITC's leadership initiative, Virgin Money volunteers are helping to extend the excellent MCR Pathways mentoring scheme from Glasgow secondary schools to those in Edinburgh.

Virgin Money is a committed member of the Carnegie Trust Affordable Credit Action Group, seeking to bring new solutions to the problem of high cost credit.

Virgin Money's Make £5 Grow programme provides nine to 11 year olds with the experience of starting a mini business using a £5 loan from the bank. Across Scotland and the wider UK, this financial education programme has given over 1,700 primary schools and over 113,000 pupils the chance to develop valuable skills and insight into the world of work and money.

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

Our work with SMEs will culminate in producing an SME diagnostic, which we plan to make freely available to SMEs on our website in 2020. As part of Working Families, Family Friendly Working Scotland will share and promote that resource to Scottish employers in due course. With an understanding of how they are doing around family-friendly and flexible working, SMEs can choose to continue to work with both organisations to make improvements to their family-friendly and flexible working policies and practice. In addition to this work:

- Working Families and Family Friendly Working Scotland run a free legal advice service for parents and carers on a low income across the UK,

including in Scotland. We offer a range of advice and support, including supporting them to make a flexible working request, all with a view to them staying in work.

- Family Friendly Working Scotland works with employers to promote flexible and family friendly working through practical support and sharing best practice. It also raises awareness of the issues and benefits of flexible, family-friendly working. It does this through its annual employer awards and its programme of business to business knowledge share events. In January 2020 Family Friendly Working Scotland will hold Scotland's first Flexible Working Festival.
- In 2020 Working Families and Family Friendly Working Scotland will publish a bespoke report on the experience of parents in Scotland, as part of our Modern Families Index project. It will include a series of recommendations aimed at the UK Government and Scottish employers to help parents in Scotland get into and progress in work. It highlights the need to focus on sectors where flexible and family-friendly working is particularly under-developed.
- Working Families and Family Friendly Working Scotland regularly lobby the UK Government with regards to exploitative zero hours contracts. Most recently, we responded to its consultation on one-sided flexibility.
- Working Families and Family Friendly Working Scotland intend to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on wraparound care in December.

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

The Young Scot Strategic Plan 2019-22 (#YSTThree) has clear ambitions to support young people to make informed decisions and choices, connecting them to opportunities and empowering them to share and hold power in the design of services and policy. We aim to be part of the transformation of the Young Scot National Entitlement Card (YSNEC) programme to give young people personalised enhanced entitlements, opportunities, incentives and services in a non-stigmatising way. We have been continuing to use and develop the capabilities of the YSNEC and smart-tech to tackle inequalities; working with partners in the Scottish Government, Improvement Service, Transport Scotland and National Entitlement Card Programme Office (NECPO) to further develop the YSNEC smartcard technology.

In partnership with the Improvement Service, we have launched the new Young Scot Membership platform, which now houses Rewards, Discounts and additional entitlement packages, including the Young Carers Package. To support and recognise the care role provided by young carers in Scotland Young Scot, in partnership with the Scottish Government, has developed an entitlement package for young carers. Young people aged 11-18 who are in school and who help to care for a family member, a friend or someone in their community can access a range of additional discounts and opportunities through their YSNEC and Young Scot Rewards and Membership platform. The offers have been designed by young carers themselves, with extra discounts available at certain stores and leisure venues as well as other opportunities, such as free cinema tickets and CV advice.

We are continuing to work to enable enhanced entitlements, smart transport, opportunities and services – all without stigma for the young person. In partnership with local authorities, Young Scot is currently delivering phase two of ‘The Attainment Challenge: National Strategic Partnership’ alongside Transport Scotland, the Scottish Government, the Improvement Service and NECPO. This phase is built on the successful outcomes of phase one, where Young Scot worked with North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and Highland Councils to provide local entitlements to young people who were facing significant barriers to their attainment using the YSNEC. These entitlements, which included local information, travel tickets, weekend and holiday food provision, access to leisure and extra-curricular activities, and help to reduce the cost of the school day, were specifically selected as they are known to improve health and wellbeing – drivers to improve attainment, reduce inequality and challenge rural poverty. The universal YSNEC and services were promoted locally, as well as the way in which the YSNEC could be used by young people facing significant barriers to access extra entitlements, which helped to create a non-stigmatising way of supporting the young people.

The collaborative partnership between Young Scot and Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire and Highland have allowed us to test and demonstrate innovative approaches to using the YSNEC to improve health and wellbeing which impacts upon attainment. Young Scot is now working with North Lanarkshire, Falkirk and Dundee Councils in phase two of the partnership to build upon phase one learning and develop further solutions using the YSNEC and supporting Young Scot services.

Employment

As an employer, Young Scot has adopted the Living Wage for all of its employees and suppliers alongside a variety of policies to help people work flexibly, including ‘talking flexible working’, carer, maternity/paternity and pet policies. We are currently developing a policy on menopause to ensure that we are supporting staff to carry on working. We know that over 45s often have a care responsibility that may cause them to give up work and have developed a carer policy that supports staff to stay. We are currently developing a new recruitment process which will ensure recruitment processes that are free from bias and that match requirements for the job with the skill level needed to make applications.

YouthLink Scotland pledges to support the Scottish Government’s aims of ensuring ‘A Fairer Scotland for All’ and ‘A Strong Start for All Young People’. We will do this by continuing to support the significant contribution that youth work makes to young people’s health and wellbeing, attainment and to tackling inequality.

We have initiated the development of a Health and Wellbeing Youth Work Network which will both represent the youth work sector and bring a youth work perspective to national strategic partnerships (such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Programme Board, Mental Health Collaborative and Healthy Weight and Diet) and policy development.

We have developed an attainment programme designed to support the youth work sector in their work alongside schools to close the poverty related attainment gap, and to promote increased recognition of the impact of youth work on outcomes for young people affected by poverty. We will provide support and guidance locally, nationally and through regional improvement collaboratives. This will strengthen collaboration between youth work and formal education in the planning, delivery and evaluation of interventions to close the poverty related attainment gap. In addition, we will develop national evaluation of youth work to strengthen understanding of how participation in learning through youth work is associated with improved attainment and social and emotional outcomes. This will contribute to an increased Scottish evidence base of what works to improve attainment and health and wellbeing. We will also work with the youth work sector to achieve increased recognition of the breadth and impact of youth work to school holiday learning loss and food insecurity.

As part of the Action on Prejudice programme we have developed a new publication to give young people the tools and options they need when faced with witnessing a hate incident. Speak Up provides five options of how a young person can be an active bystander. This was launched during hate crime awareness week and seeks to empower young people to be able to intervene safely in a difficult situation. The Action on Sectarianism website has been updated to be easier and more straightforward to use. We have launched a new Instagram channel to engage more young people on the issue of sectarianism.

We continue to host and support the work of the Equality and Diversity in Youth Work Network and have doubled membership since the first pledge. The (revised) purpose of the network is to promote equality and diversity in the youth work sector by informing policy and supporting the implementation of inclusive youth work in order to encourage an inclusive and representative sector that is 100% accessible to all young people. To achieve this the network will explore and share current best practice in equality and diversity in youth work and promote the importance of intersectional working.



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