

[REAL CHANGE]

SCOTTISH CONFERENCE **2018** POLICY PAPERS



Introduction

The Scottish Labour Party rules set out a route map for developing the party programme in the run up to the next Scottish Parliament election.

This involves the election of the Scottish Policy Forum (SPF) that includes representatives of Constituency Labour Parties, affiliates, including trade unions, councillors and parliamentarians. This will take place over the summer.

The SPF then engages in a wide ranging consultation, inside and outside the Party, which is unique amongst political parties in the UK.

This year's Scottish Labour Party Conference comes before this formal process begins.

The purpose of this policy paper is to outline the ideas that I developed during my leadership campaign, which won the backing of members, to stimulate discussion and allow conference to frame the start of the policy process.

They are policies that point to the need for real change in Scotland. A Scotland for the many, not the few.

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Leader of the Scottish Labour Party



Contents

Reshaping our economy	2
An economy that works for the many	2
A renaissance in public ownership	3
Strengthening workplace rights	4
Re-empowering local services	6
Local government	6
Early years and education	7
Meeting Scotland's housing needs	9
Crime, justice and the emergency services	10
Delivering health and care services fit for the 21st century	12
Reshaping our society	14
Eradicating poverty and addressing inequality	14
Health inequalities	15
Improving the lives of children and young people	16
Equality and representation	17
Arts and culture	19
A generational change in tax	20
Scotland in the world	22

Reshaping our Economy

An economy that works for the many

The sustainable development of Scotland's economy is a vital component in ensuring we have the resources necessary to invest in our people and communities. Scotland's economy is stagnating; growing three times slower than the rest of the UK. This is something that urgently needs to change.

Furthermore, the fruits of our economy are distributed far too unequally with persistent unemployment, underemployment, low pay and insecurity at work being obvious symptoms of that.

We need to develop our economy and share the benefits more fairly. Achieving this requires investment over the long term in our infrastructure and industries with much greater support in sectors, such as manufacturing, with far greater economic planning.

We need an economy that, as a result, stimulates more investment in research and development and that has much better and more coordinated collaboration between industry, trade unions, government (including local government) and higher education.

We also need a government that actively intervenes rather than one that sits back and hopes for the best. We will invest in every part of Scotland and leave no community behind – from the urban communities of the central belt, to rural areas of the south and the islands of the north.

To build an economy that works for the many, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Implement an industrial strategy and invest in Scotland's economy, growing it sustainably, increasing productivity and ensuring there is a fair share for all
- ✔ Pursue a policy of full employment and tackle the stubborn problems of unemployment and underemployment that prevent so many of our people from realising their potential and which have a wider, detrimental impact on our economy
- ✔ Ensure a values-led public procurement strategy, only awarding public contracts to organisations that meet minimum standards - no blacklists, no zero hours contracts, and no "Swedish Derogation". Instead, public contracts should only go to those organisations with Fair Tax Marks, with commitments to action on apprenticeships, pay ratios, occupational segregation, Living Wage accreditation and trade union recognition. Conditions will also include adherence to National Industry Agreements, where these exist - such as the engineering construction industry's "Blue Book"
- ✔ Expand local economies via city and rural economic regeneration plans that help unlock investment in local areas. Invest in broadband and lifeline transport links in Scotland's rural communities to create jobs and ensure that the nation's prosperity is felt in every part of Scotland
- ✔ Develop a systematic, comprehensive plan for existing and future education and skills demands of the Scottish economy; and a skills and education provision strategy to match these demands, which includes a commitment to retraining and lifelong-learning
- ✔ Explore the creation of a Scottish Public Provident Fund, using public sector pensions funds to invest in Scotland's industries and social infrastructure
- ✔ Ensure the criteria for Scottish Investment Bank support are inclusive
- ✔ Support non-traditional company formations e.g. Co-operatives, Worker Buy-Outs, Community Businesses, and the development of co-operatives. Co-operative Development Scotland should be placed on a statutory footing.

A renaissance in public ownership

The privatisation of our public services has been a national failure – it's time to take back control. Public ownership and control over our essential public goods and services can lead the fight for social and environmental progress.

Carillion's recent collapse has shone a spotlight on the way that UK public services are contracted out to businesses – particularly through the use of private finance initiatives (referred to as PFI, PPP, NPD and Hubco) schemes. That is why we now need a renaissance of public ownership. Not for its own sake but because public ownership means greater accountability and planning for better services based on public need rather than market forces.

Developing new forms of ownership can also provide better value for money, address the failures of privatisation and lead to greater long-term investment and planning. But it can also represent a comprehensive and fundamental change: a radical change which is both a Labour change and a popular change.

Both urban and rural land reform must also be taken forward to ensure there is a fairer distribution of land ownership in Scotland, enabling communities to be democratically in control of their future sustainable development.

For a renaissance in public ownership, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Initiate an urgent and comprehensive review of how we fund our public projects and infrastructure so that it does not provide a cash bonanza to absentee shareholders. Our public services are there to serve the Scottish public, not the balance sheets of financiers
- ✔ Commit to signing no new private finance deals; explore how to bring existing contracts back in-house; and to develop alternative public-sector models for funding, saving the public money and improving services and working conditions
- ✔ Publicly-provide public services, such as health and social care services, so ensuring quality and co-ordination
- ✔ Work proactively with councils to develop municipal ownership in policy areas like buses, social care, building, energy and land
- ✔ Create an Industrial Reform and Common Ownership Act to give workers a statutory preferential right to buy an enterprise when it is up for sale or facing closure
- ✔ Create a National Energy Company to facilitate and expand community, Co-operative and municipal energy generation and that also builds in democratic control of our energy sector. Surpluses will be used to reinvest in infrastructure and tackle fuel poverty by keeping energy bills down
- ✔ Legislate to introduce a law that that prohibits any future Scottish Government from privatising Scottish Water, and consider expanding its role as a Multi-Utility and strengthen its democratic accountability
- ✔ Take train services back into public ownership at the earliest opportunity – with the break point in the Abellio franchise in 2020 as a starting point to ensure quality and co-ordination
- ✔ Bring forward legislation to ensure that the NHS in Scotland remains publicly funded, publicly controlled and publicly accountable
- ✔ Ensure there are further robust mechanisms and support for land reform action to enable communities to take their future into their own hands.

Strengthening workplace rights

An economy that works for the many requires better wages and more secure employment, greater redistribution of the wealth generated and a stronger social contract. That means if people pay more in progressive tax, they understand that in return they will receive well-resourced and excellent public services and a fairer, more cohesive society that nurtures and looks after our individual and collective well-being.

Too many jobs in Scotland - over a quarter of a million - are insecure, without guaranteed hours or income. That insecurity then flows through our economy holding it back - from the stress it puts on working people, to the pressure it puts on family finances.

The disparity between secure and insecure work couldn't be clearer when it comes to pay. Workers on zero hours contracts earn a third less than workers on the average wage.

To make Scotland fairer and more equal, to help grow our economy and to help abolish poverty, we must create more work and make work for our people much fairer and safer than it currently is - that means the reinstatement of full and fulfilling employment as a goal of public policy.

The nature of work is changing, and with that change there are new attacks on workers' rights and new threats to decent, secure and fulfilling jobs. The so-called "gig economy", in particular, has presented new challenges which, as a society, we must address as a matter of urgency.

To strengthen workplace rights, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Tackle the gender pay gap by transforming the gender composition and addressing the imbalances in occupational segregation through the true value of the 5 Cs: caring, cleaning, catering, clerical and cashiering
- ✔ Consider the further devolution of powers relating to employment, trade union, and health and safety laws so that, as a minimum, Scotland can improve above the UK-wide "floor" of rights, while retaining the safety net of not dropping below the UK level of provision
- ✔ Support the end of the UK opt-out of the 48 hour working week provisions of the working time regulations, with guaranteed protection of jobs and earnings
- ✔ Support Unite's Construction Charter for all contracts to include direct employment, trade union representation and organisation and adherence to trade union negotiated rates and agreements
- ✔ Give workers a statutory right to own their own workplace on a co-operative basis if the company they work for is being sold-off or closed-down
- ✔ Introduce the Unison Ethical Care Charter and make sure staff in the care sector are valued in the way they should be with good pay, fair terms and conditions, and with pathways for professional development
- ✔ Defend and increase collective bargaining and sectoral bargaining arrangements in Scotland
- ✔ Review pay ratios in the public sector and through procurement to ensure the same ratios start to apply to companies bidding for public contracts, with a view to reducing pay differentials between workers and senior management

- ✔ Implement the Scottish Labour commitment to ban unpaid internships and training places, which provide an unfair advantage to those who can afford to work without pay
- ✔ Support the Unite the Union Hospitality Workers Charter
- ✔ Give the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority the same powers of arrest in Scotland as in the rest of the UK
- ✔ Build on the expertise of trade unions, already at the forefront of tackling the exploitation from the so called “gig economy” with a working group focused on ending the precarious employment practices often found where insecure and low paid work prevails
- ✔ Update the 2007 Corporate Homicide Act to deliver legislation that gives the families of victims a genuine possibility of justice through prosecutions, so ensuring that the law serves as a deterrent to corner cutting and risky practices from employers
- ✔ Improve the Fatal Accident Inquiries (FAI) system which is outdated and does not support nor engage with families at a time when they need to be heard and they need justice.

Re-empowering local services

Local government

Local government is at the coal-face of delivery in the most important day-to-day challenges we face: delivering community services that all of us depend on, providing education, maintaining and building housing and investing in and keeping our communities safe, clean and secure. These are just some of the responsibilities that local councils discharge.

Local councils can also lead the way in the fight against poverty and inequality. But the SNP has starved Scottish local government and reduced its power to carry out that role effectively.

More resources for our services is not just about grants from the government. It's also about real powers. Local services have to be released from their shackles. Scotland's local councils must also be allowed to raise additional revenue. We need a review into the powers local government has to raise revenue, with a view to increasing the level of resources local government can directly raise.

To re-empower local government, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✓ Ensure local government workers receive the pay rise they are due, funded from additional revenue, not from the existing settlement
- ✓ Instigate a review into the powers of local government to set their own revenue, directed towards increasing the level of resources local government can directly raise
- ✓ Drop the pre-devolution debt that has seen councils pay back far too much money, affecting local services in the process, as a result of exorbitant debt charges
- ✓ Support the establishment of council energy companies and community renewable schemes, which can lead the fight against fuel poverty
- ✓ Ensure that Scotland benefits by securing municipal bus companies that can lead the fight against exorbitant fares and route cancellations
- ✓ Support council owned building services to provide far greater value for the public pound, with the savings invested elsewhere in local services
- ✓ Support publicly owned and provided direct social care services to reduce the pressure on social care workers and care recipients alike
- ✓ Conduct a comprehensive root and branch review of social care, with a view to increasing publicly owned care provision
- ✓ Support methods of 'active travel' such as walking and cycling through more investment in our transport infrastructure. Not only will encouraging more people to walk and cycle reduce carbon emissions, it helps contribute to a healthier society.

Early years and education

Investing in education is one of the best economic policies a government can pursue, but it is also about supporting people of all ages and backgrounds to learn and grow and live fulfilling lives.

The Scottish Government's own surveys, education bodies, parents, teachers and unions agree that Scottish education is struggling at all levels. The system is crying out for investment, but has been beset by years of cuts.

The number of primary school children is increasing; however, there are less teachers. Overall there are 3,500 fewer teachers and 1,000 fewer support staff than in 2007. All of these impact on the experiences of pupils, particularly those from the poorest backgrounds.

Colleges are a vital pillar for building not just an economy that works for the many, but a fair and fulfilling society for all. However, there are more than 143,000 fewer students in colleges across Scotland than a decade ago, a reduction that is mostly among women and the over 25s. Attainment, retention and funding for the sector have all also fallen.

Universities Scotland states that higher education is underfunded and between 2010/11 and 2017/18 Scottish Funding Council monies to universities will have fallen by more than 13 per cent in real terms.

Investment in the quality of early learning and childcare is as important as its affordability. It can also support women – still the main child carers at home – back to work, helping to boost the Scottish economy. High quality, affordable early learning and childcare is crucial for all children.

To offer real change in our education sectors, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Move towards a flexible, all-age, all-year, wrap-around affordable childcare system
- ✔ Ensure local government receives sufficient funding and protects the education budget in real terms
- ✔ Review teachers' pay, workload and career structure to re-establish the profession as attractive and world leading
- ✔ Halt the centralisation of schools through regional collaboratives and maintain local budgeting
- ✔ Re-establish the independent inspectorate and immediately task the Chief Inspector with producing an improvement plan for CfE, from P1 to S6
- ✔ Urgently commission the design of a systematic and focussed literacy and numeracy programme (as recommended by the ICEA)
- ✔ Fund primary school teachers to go on a coding course to introduce this to pupils from primary 1
- ✔ Ensure that bursaries for those studying in colleges are fully funded so that all students can access their right to education
- ✔ Review and reform the current bursary and EMA systems so that students receive the financial support they deserve and need. And end charging for exam appeals
- ✔ Establish a transition fund to provide support and assistance to people moving from social security into further education, to ensure that nobody who wishes to attend college is left worse off as a result

- ✔ Reverse cuts to the bursaries of poorer students
- ✔ Implement in full the Commission on Widening Access, working to ensure that access to university is based on ability, not ability to pay
- ✔ Increase the student loan repayment threshold and extend the repayment period to 30 years.

Meeting Scotland's housing needs

Nowhere is the need for change clearer than in housing. Radical action on housing is required after years of neglect. Too many people can't get the home they want, live in a cold damp house in fuel poverty or face excessive agency fees and rip off-rents.

Shelter Scotland say that we are in the midst of a housing crisis - mortgages are difficult to obtain and people have to rely more and more on (often exploitative) private landlords.

Scottish Labour has a proud history of rights around homelessness. In government, we set the ambition to end homelessness. But people still find themselves without a safe, secure and affordable home on a daily basis.

The private rented sector has almost tripled in size since 1999, with 350,000 households now living in privately rented accommodation across Scotland.

Waiting lists are still too high with 12 per cent of private renters who are on a waiting list stuck there for more than ten years. This can't go on. We urgently need a new approach to housing to reform Scotland's housing sector so it works for the many.

To secure housing for all, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Initiate a massive housebuilding programme that ensures the over 6,000 children currently considered homeless have a house they can call home
- ✔ Build a minimum of 12,000 new social homes for rent each year: we will pull every lever to solve the housing crisis, and put people back to work in the process, by building sufficient numbers of homes for social rent again, and by supporting re-empowered and properly-resourced local authorities to transform the quality and quantity of social housing across Scotland
- ✔ Deliver tough rent controls to prevent exploitation by landlords through a "Mary Barbour law" to rein in private landlords and ensure that rents meet external standards and which subject proposed rent increases to an affordability index
- ✔ Legislate to take back undeveloped land held by developers and create the power to compulsorily purchase on a "use it or lose it" approach to end land banking and, in the meantime, introduce a land value tax on banked land
- ✔ Ensure that every home is fit for human habitation and extend the Scottish Housing Quality Standards to the Private Sector and ensure that private landlords adhere to minimum housing standards
- ✔ Invest to make our current social housing stock fit for purpose and make sure that all housing meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standards
- ✔ Give tenants in the private rented sector new rights to stay in their homes for as long as they need
- ✔ Support our local authorities to build homes and give them the same support received by housing associations
- ✔ Create tens of thousands of good quality, trade union jobs through a massive social house-building programme, and ensure that gender segregation is addressed via procurement.

Crime, justice and the emergency services

Our emergency services are under continual pressure from cuts and unsafe working conditions. On top of unprecedented cuts, one in three emergency workers in Scotland is subjected to alcohol-related violence or abuse at work.

We have seen firefighter numbers cut by at least 700 across Scotland, cuts in specialist police staff - taking police officers away from operational duties - and the Scottish Ambulance Service has been stripped to the core. This is unsustainable.

Scottish Ambulance Service workers are committed to delivering a world-class ambulance service and Labour would ensure that they are properly resourced to deliver their excellent service.

There should be an immediate end to the scandal of ambulances being used for triage in hospital car parks by health boards seeking to manage, and massage, their admission and waiting times statistics.

When it comes to the fire and rescue service, the priority must be to ensure that they have the resources to carry out their demanding job of protecting all communities across Scotland, including our rural areas. It is paramount that firefighters can do their job safely.

The number one priority for police in Scotland should be keeping people safe. The answer of how we best do this, will not be found in cuts.

And our police force should also represent the community that they serve. Only one per cent of police officers in Scotland classify themselves as BAME. It is woeful that this figure has remained unchanged since 2010 and with religiously targeted hate crime up by 14 per cent, we must address this massive underrepresentation of ethnic minorities by working with Scottish BAME communities and the police to improve the diversity of Police Scotland.

Access to justice is a vital part of any fair and civilised society, but all too often there are major failings in our justice system which need to be addressed.

Despite the welcome introduction of Clare's Law there were still 59,000 incidents of domestic abuse reported to Police Scotland in 2016-17; that is an appalling average of one every nine minutes.

Not only should Police Scotland be properly resourced and trained to tackle these crimes, but by extending the existing hate crime laws to specifically include violence against women and girls (VAWG), we will aim to improve reporting, remove the sexual focus of abuse against women, raise awareness of VAWG and send a clear message that gender based violence should not be tolerated in Scottish society.

The creation of Police Scotland has led to a centralisation of power in policing. Local accountability should be at the heart of a modern, responsive police force.

Abuse and violence towards Scotland's shopworkers is at a 10 year high. Shopworkers are on the frontline of policing the law on the sale of alcohol, knives, glue and acid. Parliament has given them the responsibility to police those laws, so parliament should provide shopworkers with the necessary protection. Retail staff have a crucial role in our communities and that role must be valued and respected.

To deliver real change for our emergency services and tackling crime, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Protect the role of the Scottish Ambulance Service as the appropriate responders to all medical emergency calls

- ✔ Ensure funding for the continued role for a Patient Transport Service, delivered by the Scottish Ambulance Service, rather than becoming increasingly reliant upon charities, other private contractors or even volunteers
- ✔ Ensure that police are properly resourced and trained to deal with gender based violence and domestic violence
- ✔ Extend current hate crime legislation to include violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- ✔ Fully resource local authorities to deliver services in communities which have suffered as a result of years of austerity such as, rape crisis centres, refuges and making sure that councils can provide dedicated domestic violence liaison officers
- ✔ Address the under representation of ethnic minorities by working with Scottish BAME communities and the police to improve the diversity of Police Scotland
- ✔ Initiate a public inquiry into the Miners' Strike of 1984-85 in which Scottish Miners were disproportionately targeted
- ✔ Building on the findings of the Pearson Review, improve the accountability of our policing, including ensuring that local communities have a say on how their local police service is run
- ✔ Make access to justice a priority, and ensure that Legal Aid is available for those who need it.

Delivering health and care services fit for the 21st century

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Labour Government's creation of the National Health Service. This universal service is the country's most cherished public service.

Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy are increasing. NHS Health Scotland states that "the length of time spent in ill health is also rising as the incidence of health problems increases with age".

Audit Scotland also suggest that the number of people in Scotland between the ages of 75 and 84 years old is expected to increase by 45 per cent by 2030, while the number of people at 85 and older is set to increase by 68 per cent.

Audit Scotland predict that "if current rates of activity continue, it is unlikely that health and social care services will be able to cope with the effects of the changing population unless they make major changes to the way they deliver services". Residential care equally is struggling, with the model of market reliance failing.

Furthermore, there has been no meaningful workforce planning from this government. As a result, our NHS is gripped by both a recruitment and retention crisis and an exponential growth in spending on private agency staff, while thousands of NHS posts remain unfilled.

The care sector is also struggling with recruitment. There are strong sectoral bargaining opportunities which could help drive up wages and terms and conditions in the sector.

Scotland is experiencing a mental health crisis. Our level of ambition on responding to mental health means training many more staff, but also challenging the social issues that are so often found to impact on mental ill health – including poverty, social exclusion, lack of jobs and opportunities.

We stand for world class health and care services for all ages and parity of esteem for mental health services, especially children's services.

In order to reach this parity with physical health, we must also ensure that mental health support is not limited to medication and that access to quality therapy is secured.

To ensure that Labour is ready to deliver health and care services fit for the 21st century, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Provide the necessary resources to ensure delivery of NHS services remain free at the point of use
- ✔ Fund a pay rise for NHS staff from additional revenue, not from existing budgets or by service cuts
- ✔ Use sectoral bargaining in the care sector to improve wages and terms and conditions to attract and retain staff in the sector, benefiting services users as well as the workforce
- ✔ Legislate to cap the provision of healthcare services purchased using NHS funds from private health care providers to instead build up in house capacity
- ✔ Control the use of nursing services obtained by the NHS through private agencies
- ✔ Require the Cabinet Secretary for Health to lay an annual report on key aspects of health relating to public control and public accountability of the NHS before the Scottish Parliament
- ✔ Ring-fence mental health budgets and ensure that funding reaches the frontline
- ✔ Guarantee access to a school-based counsellor for every pupil in Scotland

- ✔ Restore the bursaries for educational psychologists, reverse the decimation of the educational psychology workforce and make sure that young people in education receive the help they need
- ✔ Develop a programme of mental health training for all staff in schools and those involved in delivering education
- ✔ Allow children and young people to stay in specialist services until the age of 25, to ensure that they are getting the support they need in the transition to adulthood
- ✔ Back equal protection of children under the law, by protecting children against physical punishment.

Reshaping our Society

Eradicating poverty and addressing inequality

The depth of poverty and inequality that afflicts so many of our people weakens our society.

In Scotland today over one million people are living in poverty. An increasing number of children, up 40,000 to 260,000 (more than a quarter of our children) are living in poverty; including tens of thousands who are living in families where at least one member of the family works.

It is little wonder that educational attainment levels are so starkly different between those children who come from the wealthiest and those from the poorest households.

Every policy that the Scottish Labour Party proposes should meet the ambition of reducing poverty and inequality.

Child poverty is the foremost challenge this generation must meet as our legacy to the next. Far too many of our children have their life chances diminished as a result of the economic circumstances they are born into.

We must recognise the callous policy that is the benefit cap which punishes those people who are already struggling and vulnerable. In essence, it is a policy that punishes people for being poor by making them even poorer.

We need to provide a platform for every child and ensure each child in Scotland feels secure and able to realise their potential at school and then as they enter adulthood. Their learning and their futures should not be hindered due to a hungry stomach, or missing out on the life experiences that their peers, who come from more economically advantaged backgrounds, routinely enjoy.

The Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Increase child benefit by £5 per week immediately for every child in Scotland, lifting 30,000 Scottish kids out of poverty
- ✔ Legislate to mitigate the impact of the benefit cap for the thousands of Scottish households impacted, and reinstate the money they are losing as a result of the cap
- ✔ Ensure private schools continue to pay non-domestic rates with the money raised used for a fund to ensure every child is provided the opportunity to enjoy school trips in the same way that their better off peers do
- ✔ Give local authorities the additional resources to make sure that no child goes hungry during school holidays
- ✔ Make local authority sports and recreational facilities affordable and accessible for all children, no matter their economic circumstances
- ✔ Drive up pay by ensuring that every public pound spent compels employers to pay their workers the real living wage - 70 per cent of children in Scotland living in poverty live in households where at least one person is working.

Health inequalities

Health inequalities result from political and economic decision-making and the way society is currently organised.

How we organise society and our economy in the future can help eliminate inequalities. The acceptance of inequality is a political choice – and not one the Scottish Labour Party will ever make.

Life-expectancy in Scotland is amongst the worst in Europe, whilst differentials in life-expectancy and healthy life-expectancy - meaning the number of years you can live before being afflicted by ill-health - are stark.

In 2015, the Scottish Parliament Health Committee reported: "A boy born in Lenzie, East Dunbartonshire, can expect to live until he is 82, yet for a boy born only 8 miles away in Calton in the East End of Glasgow life expectancy may be as low as 54 years, a difference of 28 years or almost half as long again as his whole life."

Vital though it is, the NHS by itself can't resolve the harmful failure that this Health Committee statement highlights. Tackling health inequalities demands that we use all the levers of power at our disposal in tackling this national challenge.

The Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✓ Create national targets for reducing health inequalities
- ✓ Create a cross-portfolio Cabinet Secretary for Health Equity
- ✓ Create statutory guidance that ensures more effective co-ordination of activity between government, local authorities, health boards and communities to tackle health inequalities
- ✓ Ensure a health inequality impact assessment is undertaken on every single

policy proposal put forward by every public authority in Scotland; including the government

- ✓ Review and improve the allocation of public funds allocated to make sure more resources go to where they are needed most, based on the socio-economic circumstances of communities
- ✓ Charge Scotland's special health board - National Services Scotland, Health Scotland - to provide evidence, data, evaluation and implementation support for equity measures that will help identify where the allocation of resources is needed most.

Improving the lives of children and young people

As well as improving the employment and financial situations for families, we also need to ensure the country's children have all they need to thrive.

Looking after our children, nurturing their talents and ambitions, will take considerable investment, but this is an investment in our future generations which will have both great social and economic benefits.

Too often, however, government focus and attention ignores the most vulnerable in society, and the results can be a societal exclusion for these young people.

How we look after our most vulnerable children is a test of the cohesive functioning of society.

Looked after children in particular, are being let down by policy makers and current public policy.

If we are to give these children and young people the best chance of a successful fulfilling life then it is essential that we invest at the earliest opportunity.

We need a comprehensive package to help young people leaving care, but we also need to consider how we can help them when in care with both long term and immediate policy priorities.

The Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Expand access of concessionary travel to include care experienced young people
 - ✔ Provide exemption from council tax up until the age of 26 when the state's official responsibilities as corporate parent cease
 - ✔ Ensure care experienced young people have access to training and modern apprenticeships (with a guaranteed quota of places across the public sector) and with a guarantee of an interview when applying for a job in any public authority
 - ✔ Increase funding for school clothing grants so that all children can feel like full members of their school community, rather than be excluded or made to feel different
 - ✔ Explore the opportunity for the introduction of a care endowment grant given to young people in care over the period of their care, with final payment on leaving care, to make up for what other children receive from their parents or guardians
 - ✔ Ensure foster carers receive proper training and support, including access to respite care when needed.
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- ✔ Extend the current Scottish provision of free school meals to include primary years 4-7, benefitting up to 183,000 Scottish pupils, ending the stigma of free school meals and contributing to the closure of the shameful educational attainment gap
 - ✔ Support priority access for care experienced young people for services on the NHS, including mental health services where they have a disproportionate need

Equality and representation

Labour is the party of equality: we must work to build a society free from all forms of sexism, homophobia, racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, discrimination against disabled people and bigotry and prejudice in all their forms.

Our party should be proud of what we have achieved on gender equality. It is Labour that created gender balance mechanisms, increased maternity pay and introduced the Equalities Act - but the fight is far from over.

Diversity enriches our decision making about priorities and policy. We would all benefit from a talent academy which will focus on developing future candidates and activists who are women, BAME, LGBTI, or disabled - not just when there is an election, but all year round.

Women born in the 1950s have had their state pension age changed without fair notification, leaving many in poverty. Around 253,000 women in Scotland have been affected by this change, as highlighted by the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign. These women deserve both recognition for the injustice they have suffered, and decent compensation for their losses.

As we strive for equality and greater representation, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Set by example in the Scottish Labour Party with at least 50:50 gender balance in all marginal parliamentary and council selections, and promote diversity in those representatives
- ✔ Whether in administration now, or in the future, our councillors should support the resolution of outstanding and any potential third wave Equal Pay claims
- ✔ Retain an annual Scottish Labour Women's Conference with policy making powers

- ✔ Work with trade unions to address workplace sexual harassment in Scotland, looking at ways to encourage reporting and to ensure that employers take it seriously
- ✔ Prioritise childcare as an economic policy as it needs wholesale transformation to be flexible, affordable and to properly reward workers
- ✔ Properly value the contribution made by unpaid carers, immediately raising Carers' Allowance to the Jobseeker's Allowance rate as a starting point
- ✔ End the scourge of period poverty, in particular ending the huge mark-up on vending machines and investigating all opportunities to address the stigma and inequalities that still persist in relation to menstruation
- ✔ Work to address the gender gap in subject choices at school and beyond by creating a Gender Equality Training Standard for current and new teachers: a tool to be developed by passionate educators who are already leading on this in Scotland's classrooms
- ✔ Work to close the gender gap through targeted use of gender quotas in Scotland's educational institutions and in modern apprenticeships where there is a high level of occupational segregation, such as in social care and construction
- ✔ Ensure that women and diverse communities are fairly represented on Scotland's public boards and in other public appointments – and further explore including care experienced people in this work
- ✔ Ensure a zero-tolerance approach to violence, bullying and discrimination based on sexuality and gender in Scottish society. We fully support the TIE campaign

focused on tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in all of our society, but particularly their fantastic work in combating bullying in schools and would support LGBTI inclusive education throughout Scotland's schools

- ✔ Work with groups, such as the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights, to further their excellent work to eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial justice across Scotland
- ✔ Establish a review looking into the often under-reported conditions BAME workers face in Scotland - this work would be in partnership with organisations, such as the STUC
- ✔ Work with national and local disability organisations to ensure better access into work, training and apprenticeships - with the aim of improving the employment rate for adults classified as disabled under the Equality Act, which currently stands at 42.9 per cent compared to 80.1 per cent not classified as disabled
- ✔ End the scourge of zero hours contracts and insecure work that has also disproportionately affected the BAME community
- ✔ Guarantee justice sought by workers who have experienced discrimination, whether that is women waiting on the settlement of historical equal pay claims, former miners or blacklisted construction workers
- ✔ Explore options for further transitional protections, or use of devolved powers to ensure that all pensioners, especially women affected by state pension changes, have security and dignity in older age.

Arts and culture

A thriving arts sector, together with a properly-resourced and independent media sector, is a necessary prerequisite for democracy to flourish.

The creative industries in Scotland have a significant economic impact too, generating over £3bn annually and employing almost 70,000 people, and the impact of cultural activity on social cohesion and community well-being far exceeds its direct economic and employment benefits.

However, there are increasing inequalities in terms of access to the arts, with too many economic and social barriers which prevent those from more deprived communities gaining access, both as performers and as audience members.

The recent Scottish Household Survey provides evidence that engagement, attendance and participation in culture is not evenly distributed across the population and that inequality appears to be widening.

Scottish Labour wants to make the arts and culture accessible to all, so, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Provide opportunities for all – for young people to develop their creativity at school, they should have the opportunity to learn an instrument, participate in drama, dance and to attend a theatre, gallery or museum in their local area
- ✔ Increase access to creative arts education with a scholarship fund that gives 100 students from disadvantaged backgrounds free tuition at organisations within the UK
- ✔ Reduce the financial barrier to becoming involved in the arts - establishing a 'Creative Community Fund' that will enable talented individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to obtain the necessary funding to pay fees and costs to the many excellent youth and adult creative arts groups across Scotland that offer training and performance opportunities
- ✔ Free music tuition at every school – ending the postcode lottery for music tuition across Scotland; it is unfair that some students have limited access to music tuition, whilst others have much greater opportunities. Working with the Musicians' Union and the Educational Institute of Scotland and other unions in Scottish education to ensure that music teachers and music tuition is fully supported in our schools
- ✔ Creating access to a musical instrument programme – introducing a fund which purchases and distributes musical instruments to every primary school
- ✔ Fair pay for artists - all companies, organisations and individuals in receipt of public funding should be required to commit to paying employees a real living wage, as a minimum, and to pay proper trade union rates
- ✔ Trade union rights - All public art organisations receiving funding assistance from the public purse should ensure there are procedures in place to allow employees and artists the opportunity to join a recognised trade union of their choice.

A generational change in tax

The Scottish Parliament now has powers to raise and redistribute resources through increasing our tax yield, and by using the borrowing powers it now has.

With that power comes the responsibility to use every opportunity available to combat the poverty and inequality which grips too many, and to invest in an economy that can grow the wealth needed for strong public services.

It is clear we need a once-in-a-generation discussion about taxation in Scotland.

A tax system reveals much about the distribution of wealth, income and power in a society. During the 1980s the burden of taxation was quite deliberately shifted from the few to the many, and from the corporation to the individual citizen.

Under the guise of tax cuts for all, huge tax cuts were introduced for the wealthiest. With the return of the Tories in 2010, once again there has been a move from direct to indirect taxation, and from unearned to earned income.

Corporation tax alone has been cut from 26 pence to 19 pence in the pound. And the top rate of income tax has been cut from 50 pence to 45 pence. The standard rate of VAT is now 20 per cent, up from 17.5 per cent.

As a result of this, coupled with the driving down of real pay in both the public and private sector and attacks on the poorest and most vulnerable in society, inequality in Scotland is rising. So much so that the Scottish Government has recently reported that the richest one per cent in Scotland now own more personal wealth than the bottom fifty per cent put together.

The Scottish Parliament now has the powers to vary income tax bands and rates. We need to consider how to make income tax more progressive. But it is clear that we cannot

look at taxation by looking at income tax in isolation. We must tackle endemic low pay in the economy, specifically by rolling out the Scottish Living Wage and moving towards a secure, full employment, high wage, high value economy. And by promoting trade union organisation and collective bargaining in general, including sectoral bargaining.

Vacant land is failing to contribute to Scotland's economy, instead it is often a blight on local communities.

Powers to levy a vacant land tax on more than 10,000 hectares of vacant, economically inactive land should be devolved to local government to give local authorities greater power to fund their services and invest in their communities.

It would not apply to land with non-derelict buildings or facilities located on it, or land used for any useful purpose, such as agriculture, recreation or sport.

As well as providing greater powers to local government, a Land Value Tax would also enhance and broaden the tax base across Scotland.

In turn, if the tax encourages development it will reduce its own tax base which, in turn, will increase tax revenue from economic activity and support development goals. But any debate on taxation must also consider the taxation and treatment of wealth as well.

Labour needs an approach based upon the need to reduce the relative tax burden on the poorest and to be sufficiently progressive as earnings and wealth rise, in order to deliver the radical change that Scotland needs.

Labour's Taxation and Investment Commission has already been launched and will be chaired by Professor Christine Cooper. The aim of the Commission will be to develop a long term strategic approach to fiscal policy for creating a more equitable society, including the tax treatment of wealth.

Based on the Commission's work, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively build a long term tax policy:

1. That is Progressive – The principle that we need to adopt is that the burden of taxation must fall progressively on the broadest shoulders. This is the fundamental point of 'the many, not the few' approach. Measures that raise tax revenue overall but do so by shifting the burden onto the least well off or those struggling to get by on middle incomes are not progressive, and will fail to deliver the transformation we need

2. That Unlocks Wealth –The Scottish Government has acknowledged the problem of growing wealth inequality, but has proposed no solutions. Our economic policy must unlock wealth and put it to work - both to redistribute from the few to the many, but also to raise the level of investment and transform the economy. Failing to do so will merely be tinkering at the edges

3. That is Democratic - What is required is a once in a generation change in the structure of the Scottish economy. A changed, progressive tax policy is key to that. This cannot be done as a top-down measure, imposed by one or two politicians. This is about transforming Scotland. So we will create rounded policy to raise investment and make Scotland more equal, involving the whole of the Scottish labour movement, working collaboratively with the Scottish public, academics, community activists, and the third sector, ending with a democratic conference decision by the Scottish Labour Party. That policy will also include other progressive fiscal and investment stimulus, such as the treatment of the environment and climate change.

Scotland in the world

Our roots and outlook as a party are internationalist and we should always be clear that Scotland must take its place in the world as a progressive voice.

As a country we are facing the most challenging international situation for a generation. Brexit represents a huge potential shock to our economy and public services, and with the Tories in charge of the negotiations workers' rights are also under threat.

We must remain absolutely clear that the challenges posed by Brexit cannot be used as a smokescreen for renewed constitutional positioning from a Scottish Government looking to further its desire for Scottish independence.

The reality is that the economic impact of Brexit on Scotland could be as big, if not bigger, than the global economic crash, and could have far longer lasting consequences.

Yet amid the threats of Brexit and the turmoil of Tory negotiations, the SNP has jumped from one position to another a number of times.

From demanding full membership of the EU as an independent country, to retaining single market membership; preferring EFTA to the EU; and now back to full membership of the single market and the customs union – each time looking to advance its own constitutional focus of Scottish independence, rather than support Scotland's economy and workers' rights.

Without doubt, the SNP is using Brexit to push its usual agenda and agitate for another referendum; not to remain in the EU, but to leave the UK.

We want a deal that is a good deal for the people of this country, not no deal and not a bad deal, and certainly not to be dragged into another independence referendum.

That must mean a deal that retains the benefits of the single market and customs union, but which negotiates in other areas that we believe have not been so beneficial for the UK and Scottish economies.

Labour has set out six tests which must be met. These are:

1. Does it ensure a strong and collaborative future relationship with the EU?
2. Does it deliver the "exact same benefits" as we currently have as members of the single market and customs union?
3. Does it ensure the fair management of migration in the interests of the economy and communities?
4. Does it defend rights and protections and prevent a race to the bottom?
5. Does it protect national security and our capacity to tackle cross-border crime?
6. Does it deliver for all regions and nations of the UK?

When a Donald Trump state visit to the UK was first proposed last year, reports suggested that he will head to Scotland – a suggestion that was met with condemnation from groups across the country. Scottish Labour will stand in solidarity against the visit and politics of Trump.

Unlike Donald Trump we recognise that investing in our environment is crucial to delivering a healthier, cleaner and more prosperous society.

Real change means ensuring we push for bold environmental protections, set ambitious targets and ensure we take a societal approach, from investing in renewables to delivering warmer, more energy efficient housing.

To take our place in the world, the Scottish Policy Forum should consider how we can most effectively:

- ✔ Continue to fight for a Brexit deal that retains the benefits of the single market and customs union, but which negotiates in other areas that we believe have not been as beneficial
- ✔ Fight against any attempt to use Brexit to water down workers' rights and to ensure that Scottish jobs and the Scottish economy is prioritised
- ✔ Support a vote against any Brexit deal which does not meet the six tests set out by Keir Starmer MP
- ✔ Work with trade unions, anti-racist groups, women's groups, faith groups and other campaigning organisations to be at the forefront of opposing a visit by Donald Trump to Scotland
- ✔ Set the opposite course to Trump: by backing action on climate change; working for equality for all, against racism, sexism and all forms of discrimination; and promoting peace and co-operation
- ✔ Ensure the delivery of major investment in better, warm, energy efficient housing – because improving the energy efficiency of our homes is the single most effective way to end fuel poverty, whilst also cutting emissions and creating more jobs
- ✔ Work with stakeholders across Scottish civic society from environmental groups to the trade unions to agree world-leading emissions targets which are not only achievable, but which safeguard jobs and incomes
- ✔ Continue to campaign against any future trade deals which, through mechanisms such as ISDS, put the rights of corporations above the rights of citizens
- ✔ Continue to campaign against a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) like agreement because of its potential to drive privatisation in public services and undermine democracy
- ✔ Continue to campaign against the Canadian European Trade Agreement (CETA), which has exactly the same potential as TTIP to drive privatisation in public services and undermine democracy.

