



A GENDER EDIT of A STRONGER SCOTLAND: THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMME FOR SCOTLAND 2015-16

This document is a 'gender edit' guide to the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2015-16. It includes all extracts that refer directly to women and gender, and selected text on issues where there are clear implications for women and girls in Scotland, such as social security. It should be noted that many of the policy and funding commitments set out in the Programme for Government are not new announcements, for instance the £20m additional funding for violence against women, forthcoming changes to the public sector equality duty and plans to increase childcare provision. It does, however, confirm the Scottish Government's legislative programme for the remainder of the parliamentary term.

A STRONGER AND FAIRER SCOTLAND

Using new powers (p.20)

We will:

- Address weaknesses, within our limited powers, in Universal Credit and abolish the bedroom tax as soon as we have the powers to do so.
- Abolish fees for employment tribunals.
- Promote equalities by taking early action on gender balance on public boards.

A Scottish social security system (p.20-21)

Our new powers over social security, despite their limited scope, will provide opportunities to develop different policies for Scotland which are fairer and help tackle inequalities and poverty, in line with the core purpose of the Scottish Government.

We are committed to establishing a social security system that has at its heart a set of principles and values that govern it. This will include ensuring that people are treated with respect and dignity during their time of applying for, being assessed, and receiving disability-related benefits.

Our Social Security Bill, and accompanying legislation, will be wide-ranging, covering the principles which will underpin our approach to social security in Scotland as well as the improvements we intend to make to the system we inherit.

We are working to develop successor arrangements for the regulated Social Fund that provides Sure Start Maternity Grants. [...] As part of this we will improve links to other devolved services such as support for mothers during pregnancy.

Scotland's place in the world (p.22)

We will continue to use our international activity to promote policy priorities such as gender equality, educational attainment, human rights and democratic participation.

We will also use our position as a world leader in social enterprise development to share expertise internationally. Our expertise will help support organisations that are working with disadvantaged groups including women and disabled people.

We will oversee the successful implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in Scotland by 2030, particularly in relation to areas which the Scottish Government is already driving forward; tackling poverty, gender equality, access to education for all, and renewable energy.

A STRONG SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Our plans include: (p.9)

- Working with employers to address gender stereotypes and support more women across the workplace.

Entrepreneurship (p.33)

We will accelerate progress in tackling the enterprise gender gap. We will continue to implement the 2014 'Women In Enterprise Action Framework', developed in partnership with 'Women's Enterprise Scotland'.

Inclusive economic growth (p.35)

To support inclusive growth, we will:

- Pursue an inclusive labour market by reducing barriers to employment to help women, young people and other groups to overcome structural challenges to their participation in work.

Scotland's female employment rate is now the second highest in Europe. However, women still face too many challenges in the labour market and access to affordable early learning and childcare remains a significant barrier to many women seeking to return to work. Details on how the Scottish Government is promoting access to early learning and childcare is covered in Chapter 4.

We also know that women are disproportionately affected by issues such as low pay, underemployment and part-time working. These challenges are being addressed by the Fair

Work Convention, established in April 2015, and by a targeted approach to women in our consultation on employability services.

Over the next year we will continue to work with strategic partners to deliver a more inclusive workforce. We will:

- Work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, whose recent report on Pregnancy and Maternity-Related Discrimination and Disadvantage showed that around 54,000 new mothers may be forced out of their jobs in Britain each year.
- Continue to promote Fair Work practices through our procurement activity as well as being clear that we oppose any use of exploitative zero-hours contracts.
- Take action on equal pay.
- Pursue the devolution of powers from the UK Government to allow us to legislate for gender balance on boards, although in the meantime we will continue to pursue this through a voluntary route in our 50/50 by 2020 campaign.

Gender pay equality (p.35)

We will extend the duty on public authorities to publish gender pay gap information and statements on equal pay, including occupational segregation.

These duties currently apply to authorities listed in the Equality Act 2010 which have more than 150 employees. We propose to lower the threshold so that the duty applies to listed authorities with more than 20 employees.

In addition, we will continue to build membership of the Partnership for Change, ensuring more public, private and third sector bodies sign up to the 50/50 by 2020 commitment. We will hold a number of themed events for specific sectors to ensure that the 'pipeline' of talent is ready to deliver diverse candidates for board positions.

Modern apprentices (p.36)

We will increase the take-up of Modern Apprenticeships by young disabled people and young people from BME backgrounds, and to significantly reduce gender segregation within Modern Apprenticeship frameworks.

PROTECTING AND REFORMING OUR PUBLIC SERVICES

Childcare and early learning (p.48)

Investment in early learning and childcare remains one of our most important policies to improve outcomes for children and support participation in the labour market, especially for women.

Our early learning and childcare policy supports parents to work, train or study, especially those who need routes into sustainable employment and out of poverty. The Scottish Government has committed an extra £330 million over 2014-15 to 2015-16 to implement increased hours of early learning and childcare to 600 hours a year; to extend this to 27% of two year olds; and, improve flexibility and choice based on local consultation.

The Scottish Government has committed to further expansion, and has started planning to double those hours to 30 hours a week from 2020, including significant expansion in the early learning and childcare workforce.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences (p.48)

We have committed £20 million in additional funding over three years towards a range of measures to tackle all forms of violence against women and girls.

Between March and June this year we consulted on a range of changes to the law to strengthen the powers of police and prosecutors to tackle domestic abuse and sexual offences, including seeking views on the potential for a specific domestic abuse offence, as well as a specific offence against the sharing of private intimate images and on directions to juries in rape trials.

We are continuing to work with key stakeholders on the preparation of a specific offence and in November we will publish and seek views on the exact wording of a specific offence to deal with those who commit psychological abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. We will also introduce a Bill to Parliament to take forward other measures arising from the consultation including a new statutory domestic abuse aggravator.

Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm Bill (p.49)

The Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm Bill will modernise the criminal law to better reflect the nature and experience of domestic abuse. It will also reform the law in relation to acts of harassment and sexual offending. The Bill includes policy consulted upon in the Scottish Government's Equally Safe Reforming the Criminal Law to Address Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences publication to help give the police, prosecutors and our courts additional powers to ensure effective action can be taken against those who commit domestic abuse, harassment and sexual offences.

Community justice (p.50)

We will create a new national prison for women, along with a number of small community-based custodial units by 2019-20. This will be consistent with the recommendations of the Commission for Women Offenders and will deliver a bold new vision for how women in custody are looked after in Scotland, in keeping with a core set of principles that ensure:

- Where courts determine that a custodial sentence is appropriate, security should be proportionate to the risk posed by women offenders.
- Custodial facilities for women should support a recovery ethos.
- Custodial facilities for women should be located as close as possible to communities.

The Scottish Government will invest a further £1.5 million in community-based justice services for women in 2015-16. This will help sustain existing services and provide additional funding for local services that should help reduce the number of women being remanded and receiving short sentences.

Substantial investment in community facilities (p.58)

Current plans for 2015-16 are for new community facilities in:

- NHS Dumfries & Galloway – a new Women and Children’s Hub (£3.3 million) is due in Summer 2016.

Regulation of private healthcare clinics (p.61)

We will use secondary legislation to give Healthcare Improvement Scotland powers to regulate independent clinics whose services are provided by specified healthcare professionals. To support this we have commissioned a social marketing campaign to find out how to improve the knowledge and choices made, especially of young women from socio-economically deprived groups, before they use a variety of cosmetic interventions.

**For further information please contact Jill Wood, Policy Manager, Engender
Jill.Wood@engender.org.uk, 07889 805 787**