



## **A GENDER SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR PARTIES' 2015 GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO COMMITMENTS**

### **WOMEN'S EQUALITY AND THE MANIFESTOS**

Engender is Scotland's feminist organisation, working for women's economic, cultural and social, and political equality.

Women in Scotland are interested in all of the issues that are being discussed as part of the short campaign in the 2015 UK general election. The economy and austerity, peace and security, and the design and delivery of public services all have an impact on women's lives in Scotland and in the UK.

Our summary focuses on those issues that are of most relevance to Engender's work to advance and enable women's equality. These include anti-discrimination law, social security, income and women's labour market participation, care and childcare, women's political representation and representation on boards, immigration and asylum, access to justice, LGBT, disability, and race equality measures, human rights, and peace and security.

We have pulled out the promises and commitments from each of the party manifestos.

### **HOW WE HAVE HANDLED DEVOLVED POLICY AREAS**

The parties have taken different approaches to setting out issues that are devolved to the Scottish Parliament and reserved to the Westminster Parliament in their manifestos. Health, education, social care, and the delivery of childcare are devolved, and consequently some of the promises made about specific delivery programmes in these policy areas will have an impact on the Scottish budget, but are not directly relevant to Scotland. We have not included those commitments in our summary.

We have also not included statements that express a broad wish for a positive outcome, but do not suggest any policy, programme, target, or specific ambition.

Policy area	Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party	Scottish Green Party <sup>1</sup>	Scottish Labour <sup>2</sup>	Liberal Democrat	Scottish National Party
Anti-discrimination law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require companies with more than 250 employees to publish the difference between the average pay of their male and female employees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require businesses to publish pay data.</li> <li>Improve flexible working rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require companies with over 250 employees to publish information on the gender pay gap.</li> <li>Strengthen the law against maternity discrimination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure swift implementation of the new rules requiring companies with more than 250 employees to publish details of the gender pay gap in companies.</li> <li>Consult on mandatory 'equality pay reviews'.</li> <li>Maintain the public sector equality duty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devolve equalities law.</li> <li>Demand early action on equal pay audits for big companies.</li> <li>Require businesses with over 250 employees to publish information on the gender pay gap.</li> <li>Tighten the law on maternity discrimination, with legislation introduced within the first year of a new UK government.</li> </ul>
Social security and welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find £12 billion from welfare savings.</li> <li>Freeze working age benefits until April 2018 (with a variety of exemptions, including disability and pensioner benefits, maternity allowance, statutory maternity pay, statutory paternity pay,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abolish the bedroom tax and workfare, and lift the sanctions regime.</li> <li>Halt the roll-out of Universal Credit and allow the Scottish Parliament to design a scheme that works</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep the household benefit cap, and examine if it should be lower in some areas.</li> <li>Cap structural social security spending.</li> <li>Reform the Work Capability Assessment and focus it on the support disabled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain the overall cap on household's benefits.</li> <li>Review sanctions procedures in Jobcentres.</li> <li>Introduce a 1% cap on the uprating of working-age benefits until 2017-18, after which they will rise with inflation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in the Work Allowance by 20 per cent.</li> <li>An increase in Carer's Allowance to bring it in line with Jobseekers' Allowance</li> <li>Scrap the bedroom tax.</li> <li>Halt the roll-out of Universal Credit and PIP.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Green Party is a separate party from the Green Party of England and Wales. We refer here to commitments that have been made in the Scottish Green Party manifesto.

<sup>2</sup> We have included commitments from the Labour manifesto, the Labour Women's manifesto, and the Scottish Labour manifesto. We have not included commitments that would be delivered by the Scottish Parliament or Government in the event of a Labour victory in 2016.

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	<p>statutory adoption pay, and statutory sick pay.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the household benefit cap from £26,000 to £23,000 per year.</li> </ul>	<p>with devolved social security powers.</p>	<p>people need to get into work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abolish the bedroom tax.</li> <li>Pause and review Universal Credit.</li> <li>Devolve power to top up UK benefits and to introduce new benefits funded from Scotland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage landlords to lower their rent by paying them Housing Benefit directly, with tenants' consent, in return for a fixed reduction.</li> <li>Improve the benefits system for disabled people, based on the principle of one assessment, one budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reverse the replacement of Disability Living Allowance by PIP.</li> <li>Block the £3 billion cut to disability funding by 2017-18.</li> <li>Seek urgent reform of the conditionality and sanctions regime to establish a fairer approach.</li> <li>Support an overhaul of the Work Capability Assessment.</li> <li>Back increases of at least the cost of living in welfare benefits (using CPI).</li> </ul>
<p>Waged income and women's labour market participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accept the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission that the national minimum wage should rise to £6.70 this autumn, on course for a minimum wage that will be over £8 by the end of the decade.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise minimum wage to a targeted £10 for everyone by 2020.</li> <li>Increase the minimum wage for apprentices from £3.30 to £10 an hour.</li> <li>Introduce laws to limit the size of CEO pay relative to the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise minimum wage to more than £8 per hour by October 2019.</li> <li>Abolish zero-hours contracts.</li> <li>Require employee representation on remuneration committees.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set a goal to support a million more women into work by 2020.</li> <li>Work to achieve gender equity in government programmes that support entrepreneurs.</li> <li>Extend transparency requirements to include the number of people paid less than</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise minimum wage to £8.70 per hour by 2020.</li> <li>Increase minimum wage for 18-21 year olds to £6.68 by 2020.</li> <li>Support end of zero-hours contracts.</li> <li>Remove VAT on sanitary products.</li> </ul>

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		<p>lowest paid workers in the company.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nobody should be forced to accept a zero-hours contract.</li> </ul>		<p>the Living Wage and the ratio between top and median pay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a formal right to request a fixed contract and consult on introducing a right to make regular patterns of work contractual after a period of time.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Care and childcare</b></p> <p>Note: delivery of childcare services in Scotland is devolved to the Scottish Parliament. Only care-related leave or transfers are included here.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce a National Carers' Break Guarantee, which would guarantee a fully funded, flexible week of respite for any carer caring for over 50 hours a week.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Double paid paternity leave and increase paternity pay.</li> <li>Consult on allowing grandparents to share in parents' parental leave.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand shared parental leave with a 'use it or lose it' month for fathers.</li> <li>Consult on a right to paid leave for carers.</li> <li>Include childcare support in Universal Credit, refunding 85% of childcare costs. Develop a package of specialist support for carers seeking part-time or full-time work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in Carer's Allowance to bring it in line with Job Seekers' Allowance.</li> <li>Press for a pilot programme of carer's leave.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gender balance in politics and on</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lift the number of women on national sports governing bodies to at least 25 per cent by 2017.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require public and company boards to comprise at least 40% women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use all-women shortlists in Labour parliamentary selection contests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain momentum towards at least 30% of board members being women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Press for quotas for UK wide public bodies.</li> <li>Encourage the new UK government to work</li> </ul>

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public and private boards		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the 50:50 campaign for gender balance in parliament.</li> </ul>			with the private sector increase the number of women represented at the most senior levels in our major companies.
Immigration and asylum  Note: gender-specific issues only.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EU migrants who want to claim tax credits and child benefit must live here and contribute to our country for a minimum of four years.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End the detention for pregnant women [who are asylum seekers] and those who have been the victims of sexual abuse or trafficking.</li> </ul>		
Access to justice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free access to employment tribunals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure that access to legal representation is not determined by personal wealth, but remains available to those that need it.</li> <li>Abolish the employment tribunal fee system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out an immediate review of civil Legal Aid, judicial review and court fees, in consultation with the judiciary, to ensure Legal Aid is available to all those who need it.</li> </ul>	
LGBTI, race, and disability equality measures			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a comprehensive race equality strategy.</li> <li>Reform the Work Capability Assessment and focus it on the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor and tackle the BAME pay gap.</li> <li>Outlaw caste discrimination.</li> <li>Improve the benefits system for disabled people, based on the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support calls to establish a Race Committee to advise the work of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.</li> <li>Make the case for the establishment of a</li> </ul>

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			<p>support disabled people need to get into work, and give an independent scrutiny group of disabled people a central role in monitoring it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint an International LGBT Rights Envoy to promote respect for the human rights of LGBT people, and work towards the decriminalisation of homosexuality worldwide.</li> </ul>	<p>principle of one assessment, one budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring into effect the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 on discrimination by private hire vehicles and taxis.</li> <li>• Prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion in the provision of public services.</li> <li>• A comprehensive strategy for promoting the decriminalisation of homosexuality around the world, and advancing the cause of LGBT+ rights.</li> </ul>	<p>special envoy to promote the rights of LGBTI people throughout the world, as an integral part of UK foreign policy</p>
Human rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrap the Human Rights Act, and introduce a British Bill of Rights.</li> <li>• Break the formal link between [the UK Supreme Court] and European Court of Human Rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect the basic human rights of all citizens, and will celebrate the UK's Human Rights Act.</li> <li>• Introduce a Digital Bill of Rights to protect net</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect the Human Rights Act, and reform the European Court of Human Rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Human Rights Act will remain, with children's rights protected too.</li> <li>• Pass a Digital Bill of Rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oppose scrapping of the Human Rights Act or withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights.</li> </ul>

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		neutrality and online privacy.			
<p><b>Peace and defence</b></p> <p>Note: This section focuses on Trident only.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retain the Trident continuous at sea nuclear deterrent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disarm Trident nuclear weapons in the Clyde, and scrap the Vanguard-class submarines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remain committed to a minimum, credible, independent nuclear capability, delivered through a Continuous At-Sea Deterrent [Trident].</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step down the nuclear ladder by procuring fewer Vanguard successor submarines and moving from continuous at-sea deterrence to a contingency posture of regular patrols</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to oppose nuclear weapons and believe that the UK should abandon plans to renew the Trident nuclear missile system.</li> </ul>