

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS: UPDATED SHADOW REPORT

Seventh periodic report of the government of the United Kingdom on measures taken to give effect to ICESCR, Scotland • January 2025

INTRODUCTION

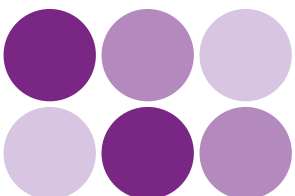
Structural gender inequality and other identity-based discrimination impact on all aspects of women's lives in Scotland. Women have less access to well-paid and secure work, women are more reliant on inadequate and shrinking social security entitlements, and women do not have equal access to resources within households. Most lone parents, primary caregivers for children, and unpaid carers for disabled and older people are women. Men's violence against women is endemic. More women live with long-term health conditions and poor mental health and wellbeing than men.

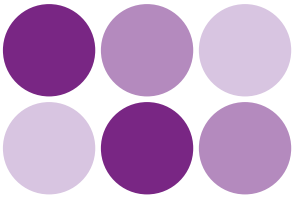
These entrenched inequalities systematically breach women's economic, social and cultural rights, particularly for women experiencing intersecting forms of marginalisation. Inequalities in this report are experienced more acutely and in particular ways by disabled women, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women, LGBTI women, younger and older women, women with insecure immigration status, low-income women, women in minority faith groups, unpaid carers, single mothers, care-experienced girls and women, women in remote and rural areas, and women in the criminal justice system. This is known as 'intersectionality'.

The UK Government's 7th periodic report to CESCER lists measures adopted by the UK and devolved administrations – including Scotland – that relate to ICESCR. However, it lacks the intersectional gender analysis that would demonstrate impacts on women and girls. The UK's response to the Committee's List of Issues is particularly poor with regards to equalities.

Devolution

The UK, as ICESCR's state party, bears the ultimate responsibility for implementing ICESCR. However, the Scottish Government is obligated to protect human rights in areas that are devolved to Scotland. The Scottish Parliament controls and is accountable for criminal and civil justice, economic development, education and early years, health, housing, violence against women policy, and aspects of social security, amongst other areas. This shadow report primarily focuses on these devolved matters from an intersectional gender perspective.





Given the interdependency of policy areas that relate to women's rights, the division of responsibility between UK and Scottish jurisdictions can be complex. However, devolution must not be used to blur responsibility. The recommendations we make for Scottish Government sit squarely within its remit.

Crisis after crisis

The UK is three years into a 'cost of living crisis' that has caused profound harm for women in Scotland.¹ Existing gender inequalities in access to resources, power, security, and wellbeing have been entrenched. Disabled women, BME women, younger and older women, lone parents, women experiencing domestic abuse, unpaid carers, and migrant and asylum-seeking women have been at particular risk of deepening poverty and destitution.

This has come at a time when many thousands of women in Scotland were already fundamentally struggling. Since the UK was examined by the Committee in 2016, the UK Government has continued to implement a wide range of cuts that violate women's rights. A recent study found that austerity measures have resulted in decreased life expectancy in the UK, with women almost twice as impacted as men.²

The Covid-19 pandemic has also had a disproportionate and severe impact on women's incomes, caring roles, physical security and mental health in Scotland,³ with ramifications still very much ongoing. UK and Scottish Governments failed to consider intersectional gender inequality throughout their crisis management and Covid-19 recovery strategies.

These crises have set back progress on achieving women's equality and reducing intersectional inequality. Government policy is undermining the principles of progressive realisation set out in ICESCR, and women and girls are experiencing retrogression in the protection of their ESC rights.

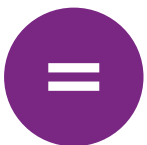
List of issues

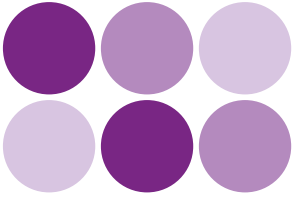
CESCR's List of Issues for the UK covers crucial areas for women's ESC rights. We welcome the Committee's consistent requests for sex-disaggregated data and are extremely concerned that the UK's response failed to comply with these, even where such data is readily available. Unanswered requests for information in relation to women's rights are compiled as an annexe

¹ Engender (2022) [Women & the Cost of Living: A Crisis of Deepening Inequality](#).

² Berman, Y and Hovland, T (2024) [The Impact of Austerity on Mortality and Life Expectancy](#). LSE International Inequalities Institute.

³ Scottish Women's Rights Organisations (2023) [Day 6 of the Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry's Health and Social Care Impact Hearings – morning session](#). Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry.





to this report, demonstrating the UK Government's disregard for gender equality - and equalities more widely - within its engagement with the Committee.

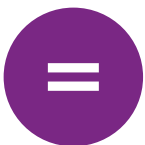
Some critical areas for women's rights were not covered by the List of Issues. We are concerned at the omission of men's violence against women, for instance, which systemically undermines the realisation of all ESC rights for women in Scotland. We also note the proposal to incorporate ICESCR and other human rights treaties into Scots law is not addressed in the List of Issues.

These areas and recommended actions for the Scottish Government are set out in detail in our shadow report.⁴ We urge the Committee to consider these where possible. They include:

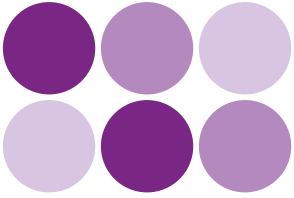
- **Incorporation of international human rights treaties** (Article 2)
Including the Scottish Government's proposed Human Rights Bill, the devolution settlement, judicialisation of domestic legislation
- **Violence against women** (Article 3)
Including primary prevention, domestic abuse, sexual violence, access to justice, homelessness, violence against disabled women, funding for services
- **The care economy** (Article 7)
Including economic strategy, the undervaluation of unpaid caring, the social care system, the National Care Service
- **Health inequalities** (Article 12)
Including the Scottish Institute for Women's Health, gaps in the Women's Health Plan, intersectional health inequalities for BME, disabled, LBT women and other groups
- **Misogyny in schools** (Article 13)
Including sexual harassment and sexist incidents, gender stereotyping
- **Media and culture** (Article 15)
Including media and cultural content, creative industries workforce

Sections 1-3 of this report provide detailed information to support our calls for Concluding Observations on mainstreaming of women's rights, women's poverty and financial inequality, and decriminalisation of abortion.

Section 4 highlights further aspects of the List of Issues that are profoundly



⁴ Engender (2022) [United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Shadow Report](#).



gendered, making recommendations on political representation, sexual harassment, housing and homelessness, and mental health.

1. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Article 2 (2) Non-discrimination

1.1 Public sector equality duty (List of Issues para. 9)

The public sector equality duty (PSED) is the key lever for gender mainstreaming in Scotland's public sector. However, the current set of duties is not fit for their intended purpose: to improve the lives of protected groups. The Scottish Specific Duties (SSDs) of PSED are currently under review, but proposals for change are extremely limited.

Resourcing

Original proposals from the Scottish Government have been scaled back significantly, in part due to cutbacks to financial and human resources. This is a routine occurrence – equalities work is seen as dispensable. In fact, intersectional equalities mainstreaming is all the more urgent in times of crisis. Scottish Government must invest in staffing, leadership and capacity building for PSED. This is especially important given significant delays to the Human Rights Bill.⁵

Reform of the Scottish Specific Duties

Reform of PSED has huge potential to reposition equality at the heart of public sector operations. However, the proposal put forward by Scottish Government in September 2023 is hugely disappointing. Earlier proposals had more substance but had been collectively criticised for their lack of ambition by 26 equalities organisations.⁶ Scottish Government analysis has rested too heavily on public bodies' resistance to change at the expense of lived experience and equalities expertise that is focused on better outcomes for protected groups. We are calling for an Advisory Group of equalities experts to co-produce a set of revised regulations.⁷

New legal duties on public bodies

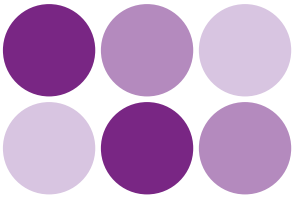
The First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls has recommended new requirements for public bodies to gather, use and publish intersectional gender data, and to implement intersectional gender



⁵ HRCS (2024) [100+ Organisations Write to the First Minister to Reverse Delaying Scottish Human Rights Bills](#). Human Rights Consortium Scotland.

⁶ Various (2022) [Scottish Government PSED Review Equality Stakeholders' Submission on Common Concerns](#).

⁷ Ibid.



budget analysis.⁸ The Scottish Government has accepted these in principle. Analysis clearly demonstrates that lack of equalities competence drives poor performance under PSED.⁹ We therefore recommend a new duty on capacity building,¹⁰ as well as an obligation on public bodies to prevent workplace sexual harassment.¹¹

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Determine and invest significant resources in PSED reform, including dedicated human resources, and a programme of capacity building across leadership and local authorities
- Revisit and expand on proposals to reform the SSDs, focused on improved outcomes for protected groups instead of public bodies' concerns with compliance
- Co-produce revised regulations with an Advisory Group of equalities experts
- Create new duties on intersectional gender data, gender budget analysis, equalities competence and sexual harassment prevention

1.2 Gender mainstreaming: twin-track approach (List of Issues para. 11.a)

International best practice on gender mainstreaming, an evidence-based methodology to support the realisation of women's rights, requires a twin-track approach. This means that the aim of securing gender equality goals must be integrated across all policymaking and resource allocation and targeted specifically via high-level gender strategies and outcomes.

Scottish Government is exploring the introduction of a national gender equality strategy, which could help tackle the glacial pace of change in closing gender gaps that systemically violate women's ESC rights.¹² Such a strategy would be strengthened by a National Outcome on Gender Equality within Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF).¹³ This has been a major omission since the development of the Framework, which failed to

⁸ NACWG (2020) [First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls 2020 Report and Recommendations](#).

⁹ Close the Gap (2022) [Close the Gap submission to the Scottish Government Consultation on the Review of the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland](#).

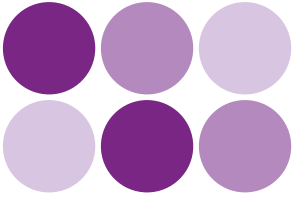
¹⁰ Engender (2022) [Engender response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty in Scotland](#).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² NACWG (2024) [First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls 2024 Report](#).

¹³ Engender (2024) [Engender response to the Scottish Government's Call for Evidence on the National Outcomes](#).





mirror targets set out in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. A new National Outcome on Gender Equality would support Scottish Government's ambition regarding SDG 5, while strengthening policy coherence across government.

The Scottish Government is also developing an equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy.¹⁴ However, this has been significantly under-resourced. The proposed methodology is untested, incorporating human rights and all equality strands under one strategy. We advocate strongly for intersectional approaches. However, there is a high risk that this methodology will be too poorly defined and overextended in focus to deliver the strategy's aims.

In 2017, the Scottish Government established the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG).¹⁵ The leadership shown by successive First Ministers in Scotland in appointing the Council, and the NACWG's relatively high-level remit to scrutinise and drive forward change within government structures has been immensely valuable. With the current phase due to end in 2026, Scottish Government should commit to its continuation, to build on steady – but slow – progress on mainstreaming women's equality and rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Commit to a national Gender Equality Strategy in line with international best practice on gender mainstreaming
- Determine and allocate sufficient resources to implement the Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy and invest in development of its methodology
- Create a National Outcome on Gender Equality within the revised National Performance Framework
- Commit to a third phase of the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls

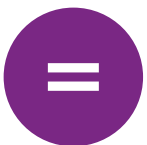
2. WOMEN'S POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

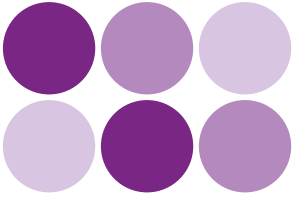
Article 9: The right to social security

Social security policy and programmes in the UK drive poverty and undermine the realisation of many of the human rights enumerated in

¹⁴ Scottish Government (2024) [Equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy: consultation](#).

¹⁵ NACWG (2025) [The NACWG: Phase Two Priorities](#).





ICESCR. These failures are being gravely exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, particularly for diverse groups of women.¹⁶

2.1 Scottish Welfare Fund (List of Issues paras. 22-24)

The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) is a grant scheme that provides vital emergency support. However, demand has escalated over recent years, as a result of UK Government social security policy, the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. The SWF is in need of reform to meet the needs of marginalised women and other minoritised and low-income groups, whose rights to social security, an adequate standard of living, good health and wellbeing, and many others have been systemically breached by government austerity.¹⁷

Recent independent review of the SWF found significant shortfalls in investment, gaps in equalities data, and the need for revised statutory guidance.¹⁸ Additional Scottish Government funding of £20m for the SWF in 2024/25 is extremely welcome and in line with the funding gaps highlighted by local authorities. It is vital that this is sustained in future budgets, alongside action to ensure the funds reach those most in need.

The Scottish Welfare Fund has been increasingly accessed by women since its creation in 2013,¹⁹ reflecting the gendered nature of poverty and insecurity in Scotland. Women are around 60% and 54% of those who access the Community Care Grant and Crisis Grants. However, a systematic gender analysis of SWF demand, use, parameters and guidance has never been undertaken. The 2023 review and subsequent Scottish Government Action Plan have a very limited focus on gender and do not address intersectionality.²⁰ Gender analysis is needed to equip the SWF to support marginalised groups of women, including unpaid carers, migrant women and – when possible – women with the ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ (NRPF) status.

¹⁶ Engender (2022) [Women & the Cost of Living: A Crisis of Deepening Inequality](#).

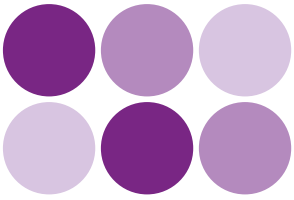
¹⁷ JRF (2024) [UK Poverty 2024: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK](#). Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

¹⁸ Scottish Government (2023) [Review of the Scottish Welfare Fund: Main Report](#).

¹⁹ Scottish Government (2023) [Scottish Welfare Fund Statistics: Update to 31 December 2022](#).

²⁰ Scottish Government (2023) [Scottish Welfare Fund: action plan](#).





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Revise statutory guidance in line with intersectional gender analysis of the Fund's structures and delivery plan, including a focus on improved data collection and use
- Ring-fence increased Scottish Welfare Fund funding at an additional £20m per annum and uplift annually in line with inflation
- Expand access for marginalised groups of women with dedicated funding streams to support unpaid carers, migrant women and women with NRPF when possible

RECOMMENDATION FOR UK GOVERNMENT

- Remove the Scottish Welfare Fund from the list of restricted public funds set out under paragraph 6 of its immigration rules

2.2 'Fund to leave' (List of Issues, paras. 22-24)

Women experiencing domestic abuse are often unable to leave an abusive partner due to financial consequences and economic coercive control. Research from Women's Aid England has shown that the cost of living crisis is condemning women to violence, with 73% saying it has prevented them from leaving their abusive partner or would make this harder to do.²¹ Two-thirds of survivors said the cost of living crisis and concerns about finances are being used by abusers as a "tool for coercive control", including restricting access to their money, and 83% said the crisis was having a negative impact on their wellbeing and mental health.

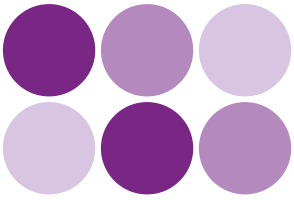
Domestic abuse is linked with financial precarity and intersectional inequality. Women are disproportionately likely to live in poverty, and financial dependence on an abusive partner is a critical constraint when survivors seek safety. The Office for National Statistics found that disabled women were more than twice as likely to report having survived domestic abuse compared with non-disabled women.²² Women with insecure immigration status, and other minoritised women and children suffer state-generated and perpetrator-generated economic abuse.

The piloted 'Fund to Leave' administered by Scottish Women's Aid in the first half of 2024 has been highly successful in supporting women to leave an abusive partner. The fund supported a total of 1,109 women and children. Survivors utilised the fund to prevent homelessness, replace items lost when fleeing their homes and increase safety for themselves and their



²¹ Women's Aid (2022) [Cost of Living and the impact on survivors of domestic abuse](#).

²² ONS (2019) [Disability and crime, UK: 2019](#). Office for National Statistics.



children.²³ Following evaluation, the Scottish Government should now commit to a permanent national fund. However, its Budget for 2025/26 does not allocate any funding to this vital safety net for women unable to afford to leave an abusive partner and stay separated.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Create a permanent national ‘fund to leave’ for women experiencing domestic abuse
- Ring-fence funds within this for women and children with NRPF
- Ensure the payment is increased in line with rising related costs and inflation

2.3 Social security for unpaid carers (List of Issues paras. 22-24)

Unpaid care work is a major cause of gendered poverty, undermining financial security for women and girls across generations. Unpaid carers from BME communities, in rural areas, and those caring for disabled people face specific challenges and added costs. These groups are on their knees following the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, but are routinely excluded from forms of government support.²⁴

The value of unpaid caring to Scotland’s economy is estimated at £15.9 billion,²⁵ approximately a quarter of the national budget. Crucial unpaid care work props up the economy, saving billions in health, social care and other public services. However, the Scottish Government’s ‘Carer Support Payment’ (CSP) and ‘Carer’s Allowance Supplement’ amount to a maximum of £2.66 per hour²⁶ for essential and skilled care work. The Real Living Wage in the UK is currently £12.60. The ‘earnings threshold’ for CSP is set at £196 per week, restricting unpaid carers to low-wage employment and increasing the risk of poverty into retirement.²⁷ This egregiously inadequate support discriminates against women, who are 70% of those in receipt of carers social security payments, and twice as likely to give up paid work to provide unpaid care.²⁸

²³ Scottish Women’s Aid (*forthcoming*) Fund to Leave: The Evaluation.

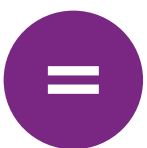
²⁴ Until recently carers were not prioritised for ‘safety net’ support within the Scottish Welfare Fund, they did not receive vital Cost of Living Payments from the UK Government, and were not eligible for Covid-19 vaccine in 2024.

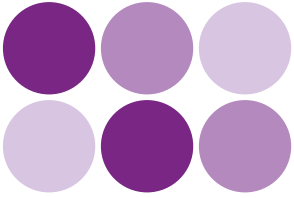
²⁵ Carers Scotland and the Centre for Care (2024) [Valuing Carers 2022: Scotland](#).

²⁶ Carer Support Payment is £81.90 per week for a minimum 35 hours of caring, or £2.34 an hour. The Scottish Government’s supplement is £288.60 twice a year, or £11.10 per week – a maximum rate of £0.32 per hour.

²⁷ Carers Scotland and the Centre for Care (2024) [Valuing Carers 2022: Scotland](#).

²⁸ Women’s Budget Group and the Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy (2020) [Spirals of Inequality: How unpaid care is at the heart of gender inequalities](#).





With the new Carer Support Payment (CSP), Scottish Government has an opportunity to rectify this historic failure of support for unpaid carers. We are resolute in calling for a Real Living Wage for carers to reflect the value of unpaid care and to enable the realisation of carers' ESC rights. Scottish Government's longer-term proposals to improve access regarding education and employment are welcome, as is an Additional Person Payment (APP) for those with multiple caring roles. However, timescales for this are unclear, and the APP is proposed at £10 per week for a minimum of 20 hours of care – a maximum rate of 50p per hour and a quarter of the basic rate of CSP. This is demeaning and damaging to women's economic and social rights.²⁹

Currently, there are restrictions on access to Carer Support Payment for both younger and older people who are providing unpaid care. This discriminates against young women and girls, who are the majority of young carers, and older women, who are more likely to experience 'pension poverty' than men.³⁰ We are calling for eligibility for CSP to be extended to 16 to 19 year olds in full-time non-advanced education and for a new support payment for older carers. Carers' contributions should be recognised regardless of age, educational status, or separate income through employment or social security.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Commit to a Real Living Wage for unpaid carers through the Scottish Carer Supplement that does not lead to income reductions for those they care for
- Publish plans to expand access to Carer Support Payment with regards to education, employment and multiple caring roles
- Pay the proposed Additional Person Payment at least at the same rate as Carer Support Payment
- Extend eligibility for Carer Support Payment to 16 to 19 year olds in full-time non-advanced education
- Introduce a specific recognition payment for older unpaid carers who cannot be paid Carer Support Payment due to receiving a State Pension

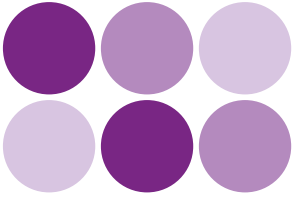
2.4 Reform of Universal Credit (List of Issues para. 23)

The UK social security system has been heavily critiqued for its misogynist design and inequitable impact. In 2018, the UN's Special Rapporteur on



²⁹ Engender (2022) [Engender response to the Scottish Government's Scottish Carer's Allowance consultation](#).

³⁰ Age UK (2021) [New Age UK analysis finds one in five UK women pensioners now living in poverty](#).



extreme poverty and human rights described Universal Credit by saying, “If you got a group of misogynists together in a room and said ‘how can we make a system that works for men but not women?’ they wouldn’t have come up with too many other ideas than what’s in place.”³¹ Action to address this ingrained gender injustice is urgently needed for women and for their children.

The policy of single household payments of Universal Credit (UC) assumes that resources are shared equally within households. It undermines women’s access to an independent income and greatly increases risks of poverty and domestic abuse for women and children.³² Scottish Government has committed to individual payments of UC, but delivery is dependent on impact assessment by the UK Government, and both governments have failed to prioritise achieving this in a timely fashion.

The two-child limit within UC and Child Tax Credit systematically discriminates against women, penalising them for their reproductive and family circumstances. Scottish Government has made a very welcome commitment to work towards scrapping the pernicious two-child limit; the UK Government must now follow suit.³³

RECOMMENDATION FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Engage with the UK Government in a timely manner to enable the delivery of automatic, individual payments of Universal Credit

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UK GOVERNMENT

- Fast-track approval of Scottish Government’s policy proposal on ‘split payments’ of Universal Credit and implement individual payments for all UC claims
- Abolish the ‘two-child limit’ within Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit

2.5 Minimum Income Guarantee

The Scottish Government has committed to exploring a Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG).³⁴ In 2025, its MIG Expert Group is due to report on what a MIG could look like and recommend steps towards delivery. However, women’s organisations are concerned that specific gendered and

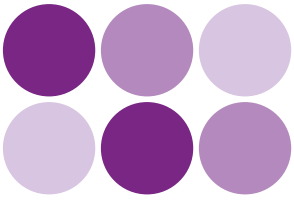


³¹ Ward, V (2018) [UK’s welfare system is cruel and misogynistic, says UN expert after damning report on poverty](#). The Telegraph.

³² Engender (2016) [Gender Matters in Social Security: Individual Payments of Universal Credit](#).

³³ Women’s Budget Group (2023) [The two-child limit to means tested benefits](#).

³⁴ Scottish Government (2025) [Minimum Income Guarantee Steering Group](#).



intersectional impacts need greater consideration in the design process. This policy, if well designed, holds great potential to lift marginalised women out of poverty and destitution. However, issues including ingrained misogyny and bias within the current social security assessment process and potential impacts on women’s labour market participation need to be addressed. It is vital that these are not replicated in the design of a new payment.

Unpaid carers are under-recognised and undervalued in public policymaking. A MIG in Scotland must be designed to ensure their needs are met. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government established a Social Renewal Advisory Board that recommended modelling a MIG for unpaid carers.³⁵ We back calls for carers to be prioritised in any piloting or initial rollout of MIG and for the impact on carer poverty to be evaluated.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Undertake and resource a comprehensive review of the potential intersectional and gendered impacts of a MIG in Scotland
- Prioritise unpaid carers in any piloting or initial rollout of MIG and evaluate the impact on carer poverty

Article 10: The protection of family and children

2.6 Social care charging (List of Issues para. 28)

Given low rates of social security support, the cost of living crisis is pushing hundreds of thousands of unpaid carers into extreme financial hardship. Carers Scotland found that 50% of carers were unable to manage expenses back in March 2022, before the height of the crisis.³⁶ Subsequent energy and transport price hikes had devastating impacts on older and disabled people and their carers – many of whom are disabled women themselves.

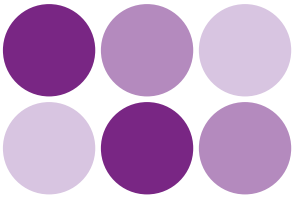
Scottish Government has committed to remove fees for social care support received in the home. This would bring some urgently needed relief to low-income groups in receipt of social care, and their unpaid carers. However, delivery has been repeatedly delayed.³⁷



³⁵ Scottish Government (2021) *If not now, when? – Social Renewal Advisory Board report: January 2021*.

³⁶ Carers Scotland (2022) *‘We are eating one meal a day and will not put the heating on in the house’ State of Caring in Scotland 2022*.

³⁷ Scottish Government (2024) *Removal of non-residential social care charging: FOI release*.



In the immediate term, Scottish Government should make it a statutory requirement for all local authorities to consider Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) when calculating total client contributions for non-residential care. In England, such a requirement is accompanied by a more expansive definition of DRE within statutory guidance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Accelerate its commitment to abolish non-residential social care charging
- Create statutory guidance that requires local authorities to take clearly defined DRE into account when calculating social care contributions

3. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Access to safe abortion and wider sexual and reproductive healthcare are essential for the realisation of women's economic and social rights. Abortion is routine care that is accessed by around one in three women in their lifetime in the UK.³⁸ Women's reproductive rights guarantee the freedom to decide if and when to have children and access to the highest attainable standards of sexual and reproductive healthcare. However, women in Scotland have no legal right to end a pregnancy, and access to abortion is subject to unnecessary legal restrictions and politicisation.³⁹ This causes harm to marginalised and vulnerable groups, including survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence, women in remote and rural areas, and those who face barriers due to age, income, immigration status, race, disability, LGBT identity or religion.

3.1 Decriminalisation of abortion (List of issues para. 36)

Reform of abortion law in Scotland is long overdue. The current legal framework that governs when abortion is permitted is a patchwork of laws stemming from as far back as the 17th century.⁴⁰ These laws largely reflect the eras in which they were introduced and attitudes towards women's rights at the time. The law, which criminalises abortion, is out of step with the modern clinical reality of abortion as routine healthcare.

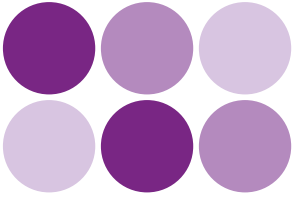
In recent decades, international human rights bodies have consistently recognised access to abortion as a fundamental component in the realisation of women's rights. The UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of



³⁸ RCOG (2022) [National Service Specification for NHS Abortion Care](#). The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

³⁹ Engender (2024) [Outdated, harmful and never in the public interest: The urgent need to modernise Scotland's abortion law and prevent prosecutions](#).

⁴⁰ Ibid.



Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), for example, has been explicit in its criticism of barriers to abortion access, including criminalisation.⁴¹ The World Health Organisation has assessed global evidence and set out guidance on rights-based regulation of abortion. This includes detailed recommendations for states to their meet human rights obligations and to act in line with best practice. It makes clear that abortion should be removed from the criminal law and should be available on request.⁴²

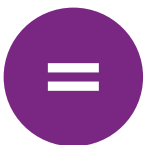
However, this is not the case in Scotland, England or Wales. Two doctors must authorise the request for an abortion, adding unnecessary complexity to service delivery and creating delays and barriers for women. Without this permission and compliance with other rules set out in the Abortion Act 1967, abortion is illegal across Britain. These restrictions create a drain on capacity within an NHS under extreme pressure. For instance, abortion care could be effectively managed by midwives and nurses, in line with miscarriage care.

The current legal framework in Scotland is:

- Outdated and non-compliant with international human rights standards
- Out of step with guidelines from global and national health bodies
- Impeding access to quality abortion care
- Perpetuating abortion stigma, harmful gender stereotypes and inequality
- Preventing healthcare practitioners from providing the highest standards of care
- Causing trauma and lasting harm that is most pronounced for marginalised women and those in situations of vulnerability.

Full decriminalisation of abortion, as recommended by the WHO,⁴³ would ensure that no one is punished for accessing abortion, for providing safe abortion, or for assisting someone to have an abortion with their consent. Issues such as malpractice or unsafe abortion would be dealt with through medical regulation and existing general law.

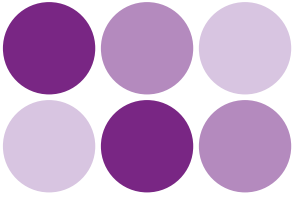
In England, there has been a sharp increase in prosecutions for abortion-related offences. Women are being subjected to invasive and traumatic investigation, sometimes following miscarriage or stillbirth. Marginalised and vulnerable women, whose access to ESC rights is already poor, are



⁴¹ UN CEDAW Committee (1999) [CEDAW General Recommendation No. 24: Article 12 of the Convention \(Women and Health\)](#). United Nations.

⁴² WHO (2022) [Abortion care guideline](#). World Health Organisation.

⁴³ Ibid.



most affected. Full decriminalisation is needed to future-proof against further attacks on women’s reproductive rights. In the interim, the WHO recommends that governments act to “stop arrests, investigations and prosecutions for abortion” as part of a suite of measures to support quality abortion care.⁴⁴

The Scottish Government has recently established an Abortion Law Review Expert Group, with the remit of recommending legal reform to make abortion ‘first and foremost a healthcare matter’.⁴⁵ This means removing abortion from the reach of the courts, policing and politicians. We urge the Scottish Government to bring forward ambitious proposals to fully decriminalise abortion and to repeal the Abortion Act 1967 and Concealment of Birth (Scotland) Act 1809.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Fully decriminalise abortion in Scotland to ensure no one is prosecuted for having, providing or assisting with safe and consensual abortion
- Repeal the Abortion Act 1967 and Concealment of Birth (Scotland) Act 1809 to modernise the law and confirm abortion as a healthcare matter
- Work with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Police Scotland to develop a non-prosecution policy for crimes related to abortion

3.2 Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services (List of Issues, para. 36)

Abortion is currently not available to the legal limit of 24 weeks gestation in Scotland. This is forcing some women to travel to England to access vital healthcare, which can be prohibitive. Those most likely to need access to later abortion experience significant barriers to travel; for instance, young women and girls, learning disabled women, women with physical impairments, women experiencing domestic abuse, and survivors of sexual violence.

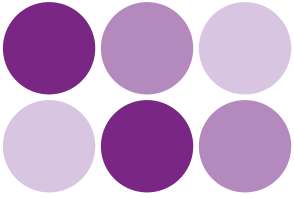
Progress has been made towards provision of later abortions,⁴⁶ however not at the pace that is required to prevent further harm to women and pregnant people. For both safety and patient choice, new services in Scotland must include both medical and surgical abortion provision.



⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Scottish Government (2023) [Equality, Opportunity, Community: Our Programme for Government](#).

⁴⁶ Scottish Government (2021) [Women’s Health Plan: A plan for 2021-2024](#).



Practical barriers and knowledge gaps may also undermine equality of access to sexual and reproductive healthcare (SRH).⁴⁷ These include language barriers, misinformation, and the lack of intersectional data collection for diverse groups. We need to understand more about women’s experiences of SRH and abortion, specifically young, BME, LGBTI, disabled, rural, migrant and asylum-seeking women and pregnant people in Scotland. Women routinely travel long distances to access SRH and maternity care in remote and rural areas, often necessitating overnight stays that are only partially reimbursed. In some areas, women are required to travel up to four hours whilst in labour to access maternity services in hospital.⁴⁸

Since the pandemic, capacity gaps across SRH services in Scotland have widened. This is limiting access to contraception, particularly long-acting reversible contraception, gynaecological surgeries, and later and surgical abortion in some areas. Women are struggling to access contraception through primary care, one of the most common routes to provision. Scottish Government must invest in these vital services that underpin women’s ESC rights.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

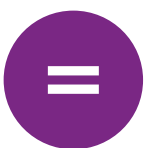
- Mandate Health Boards to provide both medical and surgical abortions up to the legal limit in Scotland, either locally or through regional networks
- Close knowledge gaps and address equality of access to NHS abortion, SRH and maternity services for marginalised groups
- Determine the scale of capacity gaps across sexual and reproductive healthcare and provide sufficient resources to ensure women’s rights to SRH are met

4. FURTHER CRITICAL AREAS FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN THE LIST OF ISSUES

Article 3: Equal rights of men and women

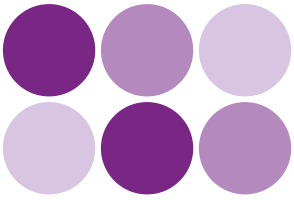
4.1 Equal representation (List of Issues para. 11.b)

Women’s underrepresentation in our political institutions creates a significant democratic deficit. Communities are missing out on women’s expertise in decision-making despite overwhelming evidence of the



⁴⁷ Engender and the ALLIANCE (2023) “Trauma, abandonment and isolation”: Experiences of pregnancy and maternity services in Scotland during COVID-19.

⁴⁸ SHRC (2024) Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the Highlands and Islands. Scottish Human Rights Commission.



positive impacts of women's political leadership.⁴⁹ We are heartened that women are now 40% of MPs in the UK Parliament and by the improvement in ethnic minority representation. However, progress is often non-linear and inconsistent.

A key challenge in mapping causes and solutions to the chronic underrepresentation of women, racialised communities, LGBTI people and disabled people is major data gaps on the protected characteristics of our representatives. Compelling political parties to disclose this information is fundamental to catalysing change and ensuring accountability for citizens. Indications that the UK Government will do so by enacting Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 are positive. However, a timeframe has not been established. With parliamentary elections and local elections in 2026 and 2027 in Scotland, it is crucial that this commitment is enacted to ensure maximum impact. Only 35% of local councillors in Scotland are currently women.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UK GOVERNMENT

- Enact Section 106 of the Equality Act in time for upcoming elections in Scotland and other jurisdictions of the UK
- Amend Section 106 of the Equality Act to cover local authorities, at which level the gendered democratic deficit is greatest

Article 7: The right to just and favourable conditions of work

4.2 Workplace sexist and sexual harassment (List of Issues para. 18)

Research by the Trades Unions Congress revealed that over 50% of women had experienced sexual harassment (SH) at work and that a staggering 80% of those affected did not report this.⁵⁰ The incidence of workplace SH in the UK is even greater for disabled, young and LGBT women, and BME and Muslim women routinely experience racialised or Islamophobic sexual harassment. A primary prevention approach is manifestly needed. To achieve this, employers should adopt both a standalone sexual harassment policy and a workplace anti-sexism strategy that includes a focus on intersectional discrimination.⁵¹

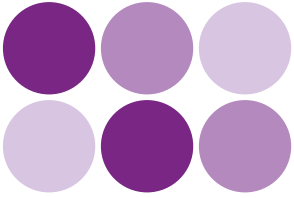
Chronic underreporting is partly driven by the prevalence of perpetrators who are workplace managers and in positions of power. This requires the development of independent reporting mechanisms that are developed



⁴⁹ Engender (2025) [Women's Representation](#).

⁵⁰ TUC (2016) [Still just a bit of banter? Sexual harassment in the workplace in 2016](#). Trades Unions Congress.

⁵¹ Engender (2022) [Enough is Enough: Tackling workplace sexual harassment in Scotland](#).



in line with best practices on accessibility. The UK's Health and Safety Executive does not consider SH to fall within its remit. Yet, workplace SH is associated with serious physical and mental health impacts.⁵² Whilst employment law is reserved to the UK Parliament, Scottish Government should do all it can to ensure that SH is understood as a health and safety issue within its Fair Work agenda and more broadly.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Develop, adopt and promote use of a) a standalone sexual harassment policy and b) a workplace anti-sexism strategy to prevent SH at places of employment
- Create and fund an independent expert body to receive SH complaints, provide accessible advice, and offer structural recommendations to employers
- Address sexual harassment as a health and safety, and occupational health issue

Article 11: Right to an adequate standard of living

4.3 Housing and homelessness (List of Issues paras. 29-30)

Women are largely invisible in housing and homelessness policy in Scotland.⁵³ This is despite the highly gendered and intersectional nature of homelessness and access to adequate housing.

The gendered housing emergency

Scotland is in the grip of a devastating housing emergency that has clear gendered dimensions.⁵⁴ Scotland's housing and homelessness system is not just broken,⁵⁵ it discriminates against women and other marginalised groups and entrenches gender inequality.

Women have significantly different pathways into and out of homelessness compared with men. Women are the majority of renters in social housing and the minority of homeowners in Scotland. Women are more likely to pay more of their income in rent, to be in overcrowded housing and to rely on social security to cover housing costs. Austerity and the cost of living crisis

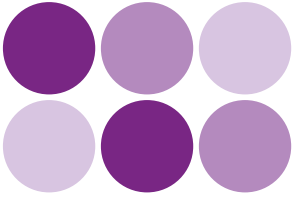


⁵² Thurston, R C, Yuefang, C, Matthews, K A, von Kanel, R and Koenen, K (2019) *Association of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault with Midlife Women's Mental and Physical Health*. JAMA Internal Medicine. 1;179(1):127.

⁵³ Engender (2020) *A Woman's Place: Gender, housing and homelessness in Scotland*.

⁵⁴ Engender and Shelter (2024) *Gender and the Housing Emergency*.

⁵⁵ At the time of writing, the Scottish Government and 12 local authorities had declared a housing emergency.



have created or worsened housing precarity for many groups of women.⁵⁶ Women experiencing domestic abuse, BME, disabled and refugee women, LGBT (particularly transgender) women, lone parents and unpaid carers are more likely to experience housing instability, poor housing, homelessness or negative treatment by housing services.

Women also spend much longer trapped in temporary accommodation (TA) compared with men, especially in unsuitable B&Bs. This is due to a chronic shortage of appropriate social housing, as well as the failure to invest in appropriate gender-sensitive TA for women and their children. This violates women's housing rights and consistently puts their safety at risk.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Enact commitments to gender the homelessness action plan, and develop a strategy to ensure broader housing policy meets the needs of diverse groups of women
- Work with local authorities to increase the supply of suitable temporary accommodation for women and children and ensure this is allocated appropriately

Domestic abuse

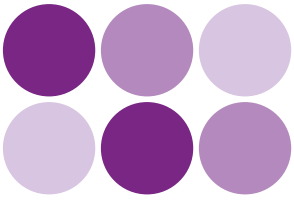
Domestic abuse is the most common reason for homeless applications by women in Scotland. These risks are amplified for women with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). In 2020, the Scottish Government committed to developing accommodation pathways for women experiencing domestic abuse with NRPF, but this has not progressed. The Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act protects women's rights to remain in their homes by allowing landlords to remove perpetrators of domestic abuse from joint tenancies. However, despite becoming law in March 2021, implementation of the Act continues to be delayed.

Emerging evidence shows that public sector debt such as rent, council tax and utility arrears are directly interfering with women and children's access to safe, affordable and adequate housing.⁵⁷ Victim-survivors are, therefore, experiencing economic abuse and are forced into poverty on two fronts: from their abusive partner and the state.

⁵⁶ Engender and Shelter (2024) [Gender and the Housing Emergency](#).

⁵⁷ Aberlour, Scottish Women's Aid and Financially Included (2024) ["We can't expect women to recover from trauma with the weight of coerced debt on their shoulders"](#).





RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

- Implement all elements of the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021
- Develop accommodation pathways for women with NRPF
- Align homelessness work with the Equally Safe Strategy, adopting a primary prevention approach to combatting violence against women and girls
- Prohibit aggressive public debt collection practices and develop debt recovery policies that recognise the impact of domestic and economic abuse on victim-survivors

4.4 Mental health (List of Issues para. 35)

Women's mental health and wellbeing has been disproportionately impacted by the cost of living crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic.⁵⁸ Financial inequality, additional strain on caring and household management roles, and heightened risks of domestic abuse are among the inequalities that account for this.

Scotland's recent census showed that young women are twice as likely to have a mental health condition compared with men of the same age.⁵⁹ One large-scale study found that the mental health of girls (aged 11-18) is "at a precipice" with a "growing gulf" between girls and boys.⁶⁰ Depression and anxiety in women are significantly higher among unpaid carers in Scotland, low-income and LGBT women, lone parents, survivors of men's violence, and women in the criminal justice system. Data is lacking for BME and disabled women at Scottish level, however, wider evidence suggests that they are also more likely to experience poor mental health.⁶¹

Investment in gendered mental health services and intersectional data collection is urgently needed. Scottish Government strategies related to mental health are largely ungendered. These include the Mental Health and Wellbeing, Self-Harm, and Suicide Prevention strategies. Efforts have been made to build equalities competence and to retroactively address gender inequality within the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy delivery plan.⁶²

⁵⁸ Engender (2022) [Women & the Cost of Living: A Crisis of Deepening Inequality](#).

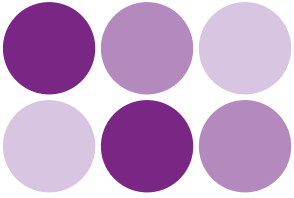
⁵⁹ Scottish Women's Budget Group and the Young Women's Movement (2024) ["I am just keeping my head above water" Young women's experiences of the cost-of-living crisis in Scotland](#).

⁶⁰ Steer Education (2022) [Girls' mental health "at a precipice" and increasingly worse than boys', data shows](#).

⁶¹ Engender (2022) [Engender response to the Scottish Government consultation on a new Mental Health and Wellbeing strategy](#).

⁶² Scottish Government (2023) [Mental Health Equality Evidence Report 2023](#)





However, understanding of how to meet women's mental health needs is still extremely limited.

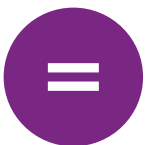
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

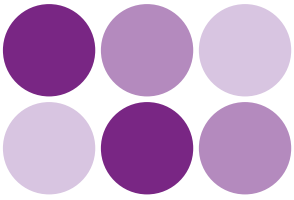
- Refresh the Mental Health and Wellbeing, Self-Harm, and Suicide Prevention strategies to embed and resource intersectional gender equality objectives
- Take specific steps to address escalating poor mental health in young women and girls, unpaid carers and other marginalised groups of women
- Build the evidence base regarding disabled and BME women's mental health within a programme of work to improve intersectional equalities data collection and usage
- Include intersectional women's mental health as a priority area within the next iteration of Scotland's Women's Health Plan

Engender is Scotland's feminist policy and advocacy organisation, working to increase women's social, political and economic equality, enable women's rights, and make visible the impact of sexism on women and wider society.

Contact details:

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Policy Manager,
Engender,
jill.wood@engender.org.uk





The following civil society organisations are co-signatories to this shadow report:



Abortion Rights Scotland

Abortion Rights Scotland brings together individuals, trade unions, clinicians and policy makers to campaign for free, safe, legal and local abortion services provided and delivered by the NHS.



Amina Muslim Women's Resource Centre

Amina MWRC is an intersectional organisation, based in Scotland, that empowers and supports Muslim and Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) women.



Carers Scotland

Carers Scotland is a carer led organisation that provides information and advice, helps carers connect with each other, and campaigns with carers for lasting change.



CEMVO Scotland

CEMVO Scotland is a national intermediary organisation. Our aim is to build the capacity and sustainability of the ethnic minority (EM) voluntary sector and its communities.



Age Scotland

Age Scotland is the Scottish charity for older people, working to improve the lives of people over the age of 50 and promote their rights and interests.



Back off Scotland

Back Off Scotland is a campaign group fighting for the right to harassment-free access to abortion services in Scotland.



Carers Trust Scotland

Carers Trust Scotland is a charity for with and about carers, working to improve support, services and recognition for unpaid carers.

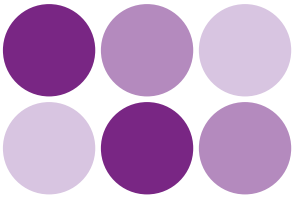


Close the Gap

Close the Gap

Close the Gap is a national partnership initiative that works to encourage and enable action to address the gender pay gap.





Coalition of Carers in Scotland

Coalition of Carers in Scotland is a national organisation that works to promote the voice of unpaid carers in the development of services, policy and legislation.



Cyrenians

Cyrenians takes a public health approach to homelessness prevention. The organisation tackles the causes and consequences of homelessness.



Equate Scotland

Equate Scotland is Scotland's expert in gender equality in science, technology, engineering, maths, and the built environment.



Human Rights Consortium Scotland

The Human Rights Consortium Scotland is the civil society network to defend and promote human rights in Scotland.



Inclusion Scotland

Inclusion Scotland is a Disabled People's Organisation – led by disabled people ourselves – that works to make Disabled people fully included throughout all Scottish society as equal citizens.



ENGENDER



Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

CRER is a Scottish strategic racial equality charity, based in Glasgow. We are focused on working to eliminate racial discrimination and harassment.



Equality Network

The Equality Network works for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) equality and human rights in Scotland.



Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland (the ALLIANCE) is the national third sector intermediary for a range of health and social care organisations.



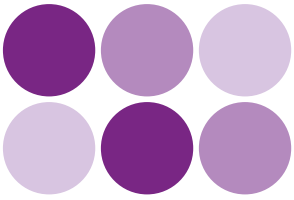
Humanist Society Scotland

Humanist Society Scotland is the voice of humanism in Scotland as the national charity with over 18,000 members. We represent Scots with a non-religious humanist view of life.



Just Fair

Just Fair is a charity which works across the UK to achieve positive social change using human rights. We believe protecting economic, social and cultural rights is essential in creating a fairer and more just society.



JustRight Scotland

JustRight Scotland (JRS) uses the law to defend and extend people's rights by providing direct legal advice to people who would otherwise struggle to access justice.



MECOPP

MECOPP works specifically to support Minority Ethnic carers to access supports and services that suit their caring situation.



Oxfam Scotland

Oxfam is a global community of people who believe in a kinder, and radically better world, where everyone has the power to thrive not just survive.



Rape Crisis Scotland

Rape Crisis Scotland is the national office for the rape crisis movement in Scotland, and host of the Scottish Women's Rights Centre.



Scottish Trans

Scottish Trans works to improve gender identity and gender reassignment equality, rights and inclusion in Scotland.



Marie Curie Scotland

Marie Curie is a campaigning and social justice organisation with a mission to close the gap in end of life care. It is the largest third sector provider of palliative care in the UK.



One Parent Families Scotland

One Parent Families Scotland provides advice and support, training and employability programmes, and campaigns with single parents to make their voices heard.



The Poverty Alliance

The Poverty Alliance is Scotland's anti-poverty network. We bring together campaigners and communities to rebalance the distribution of power and resources.



We are housing Scotland

Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

SFHA is the voice of Scotland's housing associations and co-operatives. We work to strengthen the social housing sector in Scotland by influencing change and supporting our members

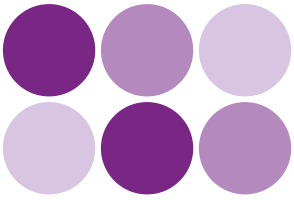


Scottish Women's Aid

Scottish Women's Aid is the lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse.



ENGENDER



Scottish Women's Budget Group

Scottish Women's Budget Group is a campaigning, research and training group working to promote equality through gender budgeting.



The Young Women's Movement

The Young Women's Movement is Scotland's national organisation for young women and girls' leadership and rights. Young women are at the heart of everything we do: they inform, shape and lead our organisation.



Scottish Women's Convention

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) works closely with women in Scotland to ensure that their voices are included across decision-making processes.



Zero Tolerance

Zero Tolerance is a charity working to tackle the causes of men's violence against women.



ANNEXE: Information requested by the Committee and provided by the UK Government

This annexe sets out the **UK Government's (UKG) failure** to provide requested information regarding women's rights to the Committee.

The Committee's focus on data disaggregated by protected equalities characteristics and other forms of marginalisation is extremely welcome. However, UKG's disregard for this is striking. We urge the Committee to address this during its review of the State party.

The response to the List of Issues was compiled and issued by UKG, with input from other jurisdictions of the UK in line with devolution arrangements. This table, therefore, analyses the UKG response only.

Topic	Committee's request	UK Government response
Article 3: Equal rights of men and women		
UKG initiatives on gender equality	11) Please provide information on the following: a) Results achieved and impact of the initiatives mentioned in the report of the State party on equality between women and men	Very poor Three lines provided on the gender pay gap, not linked to any government initiative or impact
Political and public life	b) Updated statistical data on the representation of women, including women from disadvantaged and marginalized groups, in political and public life, in Parliament and in county, district and executive authorities in all jurisdictions of the State party	No response No data provided, including women's representation in the national parliament
Occupational segregation	c) Measures taken to address and monitor occupational segregation in all jurisdictions of the State party	No response
Gender pay gap	d) Statistical data on the evolution of the gender pay gap, disaggregated by age, sex, gender, ethnic group, employment sector, disability and region, over the past five years, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of job losses among women and men, and means of enforcing reporting regulations on the gender pay gap.	Very poor Three lines provided on the detailed request for intersectional data and impacts of the pandemic on job losses for women and men

Article 6: Right to work

<p>COVID-19 and the labour market</p>	<p>12. Please provide information on the measures taken, and on their impact, to prevent the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market, including unemployment and under-employment rates, disaggregated by sex, gender, age, ethnicity, disability and region in all jurisdictions of the State party, over the last five years.</p>	<p>No disaggregated data or information provided</p>
<p>Employment re: - Young people - Disabled people - BME people - Job creation</p>	<p>13) Please provide information on results achieved, including statistical data disaggregated by sex, gender, age, employment sector, region, rural/urban area, ethnicity, disability or other relevant indicators, for all jurisdictions of the State party on the following:</p> <p>(a) Measures taken to promote youth employment, including the Kickstart and Youth Offer programmes;</p> <p>(b) Measures taken to promote the insertion and retention of persons with disabilities into the labour market, including the Work and Health programme, the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, the Access to Work programme and the Disability Confident scheme, including disaggregated data for persons with severe learning disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Any measures taken to increase and ensure the participation of ethnic minorities and disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups in the job market, including concrete results;</p> <p>(d) Measures taken to create employment opportunities at the middle-income level, particularly in regions and jurisdictions where the percentage of workers on low-income salaries is significant.</p>	<p>No information or data regarding sex or gender provided</p>
<p>Employment tribunal discrimination claims</p>	<p>14) Please provide statistical information disaggregated by sex, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, region or other relevant indicators regarding the number of discrimination claims before employment tribunals, the most common type of claims raised, the investigations carried out, the decisions rendered and the remedies provided to victims since 2015.</p>	<p>No response</p>

Article 7: Right to just and favourable conditions of work		
In-work poverty	15) Please provide statistical information on the evolution and impact of in-work poverty, disaggregated by age, sex, gender, ethnicity, region and rural/urban area, in all jurisdictions of the State party, over the last five years.	No response
Zero hours contracts and precarious work	16) Please provide statistical data on the scale of zero-hour contracts and precarious work arrangements in all jurisdictions of the State party, disaggregated by age, sex, gender, ethnicity, disability, sector of employment and media hourly wage, over the last five years.	No response
Equal pay	16) Please indicate whether the State has considered lifting the reservation of postponement of the application of article 7 (a) (i) of the Covenant regarding the provision of equal pay to men and women for equal work in the private sector.	No response
Disability and ethnicity pay gaps	17) Please provide information on the measures taken to address the disability and ethnicity income gap across all jurisdictions of the State party and include statistical information on their evolution, disaggregated by sex, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, region and employment sector, over the last five years.	No disaggregated data provided
Workplace sexual harassment	18) Please provide statistical data on harassment in the workplace, disaggregated by sex, gender, age, region, disability, ethnic group or other relevant indicator, including the most common types of workplace harassment.	No response
Article 9: Right to social security		
Austerity	22) Please provide disaggregated data on the impact of the reforms to social security on women, children and persons with disabilities, low-income families and families with children.	No information regarding women provided
Social security access	22) Please provide statistical information on access to social protection schemes, including health insurance, disaggregated by sex, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, region and rural/urban area.	No disaggregated data provided

Universal Credit	23) Please provide information on the impact and results of implementing the Universal Credit scheme, including the percentage of the current population under its coverage, coverage targets and milestones for all jurisdictions of the State party, disaggregated by sex, gender, age, region, ethnicity, disability and employment sector.	Very poor Sex disaggregated data on the coverage of UC is provided but no information on impact by gender (see section 3.4 of our report) or other equalities groups
Article 10: Protection of the family and children		
Parental leave	26) Please provide information on the impact of the shared parental leave scheme, including data on parental leave uptake, disaggregated by sex, gender, age, ethnicity, income, disability, region and other relevant indicators, for all jurisdictions of the State party.	Very poor Overall data on uptake by mothers and fathers provided only
Article 11: Right to an adequate standard of living		
Poverty rate and child poverty	29) In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, please provide updated information on the poverty rate, including data on the number of children living in poverty, measured as relative income poverty, both before and after housing costs, disaggregated by age, sex, gender, ethnicity, disability and region, for all jurisdictions in the State party over the last five years.	No disaggregated data provided
Housing and homelessness	30) Please provide information on the following: (d) The extent of overcrowded housing in all jurisdictions of the State party, including statistical data disaggregated by region, sex, gender, age, disability, ethnicity, income and other relevant indicators over the last five years; (e) The number of social housing requests presented at the council level in all jurisdictions of the State party, including statistical data disaggregated by region, sex, gender, disability, ethnicity, income and other relevant indicators over the last five years; (f) The extent of homelessness and rough sleeping in the State party, including statistical data disaggregated by region, sex, gender, disability, ethnicity and other relevant indicators over the last five years;	No response

Article 12: Right to physical and mental health

Sexual and reproductive health	<p>36) Please outline the measures taken to increase access to services in the area of sexual and reproductive health in all jurisdictions of the State party, including the provision of services at the community-level and the establishment of referral mechanisms for women who have been refused abortion by medical practitioners on the basis of conscientious objection.</p> <p>Please provide information on whether legislative amendments are foreseen to scale up access to reproductive and health-care services, including the termination of pregnancies in all jurisdictions of the State party.</p>	<p>Very poor Limited information, no response to requests regarding abortion access and legislation</p>
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Articles 13-15: Right to education

School attendance	<p>38) Please provide updated statistical information on the enrolment and completion rates of primary and secondary education students, disaggregated by age, sex, gender, region, disability, income, ethnicity or other relevant indicators.</p>	<p>No response</p>
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