

**A GENDER EDIT of *SCOTLAND’S FUTURE: YOUR GUIDE TO AN INDEPENDENT SCOTLAND***

This document is a ‘gender edit’ of the Scottish Government white paper on independence*.* It includes full extracts of passages that to relate gender equality, women and policy proposals that explicitly recognise a gender impact. It also points to selected sections on equalities, human rights and social protection more broadly, where there are clear implications for women and girls in Scotland.

**CHAPTER 3: FINANCE AND THE ECONOMY**

Employee representation

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We will take steps to ensure that women have equal opportunities in terms of the quality as well as the number of jobs. Greater action needs to be taken to improve female representation and diversity on company boards.

Whilst the Westminster Government requires firms to report the number of men and women on their boards, and has a target to increase the number of women on FTSE 100 boards to 25 percent by 2015, a number of European countries have adopted a more progressive attitude to gender balance on company boards. Belgium, Italy, France, Iceland and Norway have already introduced legislation requiring a gender quota on boards.

The Scottish Government will consult on a target for female representation on company – and public boards – and, if necessary, we will legislate as appropriate.

The Living Wage

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Our commitment to support the Scottish Living Wage for the duration of this Parliament is a commitment to those on the lowest incomes. However, over 400,000 people in Scotland are working for less than the living wage, which is nearly a fifth of the Scottish workforce and the majority of these low paid workers are women.

The Scottish Government is funding the Poverty Alliance to deliver a Living Wage Accreditation Scheme to promote the living wage and increase the number of private companies that pay it to make decent pay the norm in our country. We will continue to support and promote the living wage in an independent Scotland.

Our priorities for action

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Ending the Westminster Government’s proposals for tax allowances for some married couples. This scheme will effectively discriminate against many families where both partners work, unmarried couples, widows, widowers, singleparents and women who have left abusive relationships […] The Institute for Fiscal Studies has noted that because of the way the scheme will operate some people will be worse off after a pay rise and that even if a government wanted to reward marriage through the tax system there are simpler ways of doing so. With access to tax and benefit powers the Scottish Government will make a different choice from that made by the current Westminster Government. Our priority is to help families with children by expanding childcare provision.

**CHAPTER 4: HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SOCIAL PROTECTION**

p134

*(Including)*

* Independence will provide the opportunity to create a fairer, more equal society, built around the needs of citizens
* Spending on social protection which includes pensions and welfare is more affordable in Scotland.
* This Government proposes a series of improvements to the State Pension and to the benefits system that will:
  + abolish the “bedroom tax”, assisting 82,500 households in Scotland – including 63,500 households with a disabled adult and 15,500 households with children – to save an average of £50 per month
  + halt the further rollout of Universal Credit (UC) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in Scotland
  + change elements of UK pension and welfare rules to better protect the position of women in work and on retirement

Scotland’s social protection system

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Scottish Government analysis shows that many women in Scotland will be worse off due to Westminster’s changes to the benefits system. Mothers in particular are more likely to lose out financially as they are often the main carers of children and because certain benefits are typically paid to women.

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Investment in childcare and social housing can also have longer-term, positive impacts for individuals and communities, reducing the need for expensive interventions through the justice and health systems later in life.

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We can also choose to protect key elements of our commitments to social justice in a written constitution. […] These rights could include a Youth Guarantee to employment, education or training, and rights to welfare support and health care.

Social rights embedded in a constitution will put questions of social justice at the forefront of the work of Scotland’s Parliament, government and public institutions.

The right welfare system, working with tax and economic policy, is a powerful mechanism to address poverty and inequality.

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The Westminster Government’s equality impact assessments show that the majority of the changes have negative impacts on particular groups of people, while the Scottish Government’s recent analysis concludes that women will also lose out because of how the [Universal Credit] system in particular is structured.

We do not accept Westminster’s approach to welfare. We believe that it is possible to design an efficient and fair welfare system that meets the needs of those who depend on it, and treats them with dignity and respect while supporting those who can into work.

Immediate priorities for action

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*Including*

* Abolish the “bedroom tax” within the first year of the first independent Scottish parliament
* Halt the further rollout of Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment in Scotland … [for] those already in receipt of Universal Credit …
* Restore the ability of claimants to receive individual support rather than single household payments. We will maintain such an approach in taking forward any longer term reforms. It is estimated that this will benefit 880,000 individuals, many of them women
* Equalise the earnings disregard between first and second earners and continue such an approach into any longer term reforms. It is estimated that this would benefit as many as 70,000 people by as much as £1,200 a year and will be of particular benefit to women who are most often the second earner in a household

Future welfare in an independent Scotland

*Social investment*

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In the longer term, this Scottish Government will pursue policies which conform with the idea that welfare is a “social investment” – an investment across a person’s life that is designed at all stages to promote equality, fairness and social cohesion.

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So, for example, ensuring that there is high-quality readily available childcare supports parents to find sustained employment, but it is also an investment in children to give them the best start in life. And, as a result of this early investment, when those children go on to achieve their full potential, they will repay that investment through their productivity and creativity as active members of a more cohesive society.

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The social investment model recognises that people require lifelong investments, made at different times in their lives. When these investments are made through the delivery of high-quality services, enjoyed by all members of society regardless of income or background, the life chances of all members of society are improved. The social investment model fosters a culture in society that is more inclusive, more respectful and more equal. It also places the cash transfers that people traditionally think of as welfare – such as out of work benefits and tax credits – in a wider, more cost-effective and socially beneficial context when viewed over the longer-term. Investments in childcare, education, health and active labour market policies will reduce reliance on, and also the costs of the cash transfer parts of the welfare system.

*Halt the further rollout of Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment*

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In the event of a vote for independence in the referendum, the Scottish Government will ask Westminster not to proceed any further with the roll-out in Scotland of UC and PIP, in order to give the Scottish Government elected in 2016 maximum flexibility to begin to reform the welfare system in line with its priorities. This Scottish Government will not proceed with UC and PIP if we form that government.

*Tackling in-work poverty*

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Our proposals on childcare, and the establishment of a Fair Work Commission to ensure the minimum wage, matches inflation are designed to address [that much of the work available to families is low-paid, low-skilled, insecure and underpinned by a minimum wage that has failed to keep up with the cost of living.]

Importantly, from a social investment perspective, investments in early years childcare, and ensuring that benefits and tax credits keep pace with inflation, will help to reduce the potentially damaging consequences that affect children who are raised in homes living below the poverty line. In other words, they can reduce costs in the longer-term.

**CHAPTER 5: EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT**

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Independence will provide the ability to join up policy, tackling head-on the issues that have blighted generations.

[…]

Currently Westminster controls tax, benefits and labour market policy, and Scotland controls education policy. One may undermine the other, as when changes to welfare increase child poverty.

Early learning and childcare

*The choices open to us*

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We know that investment in the early years can bring huge rewards in later life, both at an individual level, and for society as a whole. If we want to make the most of Scotland’s people, our greatest asset, and support them to flourish in a vibrant society and economy, then it is essential to focus on their development at the earliest stages. Improving opportunities for young Scots, therefore, is one of the most important reasons for choosing independence.

Extensive provision of early learning and childcare for all families is a hallmark of some of the most advanced and successful countries today. There is a wide range of evidence indicating the potential benefits of high quality, funded early learning and childcare, with all social groups benefiting from high quality pre-school provision and children from the poorest families gaining most from universal provision.

Clearly, the principal aim of providing this support is to give children the best start in life and the greatest chance to succeed as they grow and develop into adults. However, it brings with it other important benefits for society as a whole.

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Childcare has important benefits for children and it also provides a key support to participation in the labour market, particularly for women […] Under the devolution settlement, the tax revenues and benefits savings arising from increased labour market participation by mothers would flow to the Westminster Government. With independence, these benefits would accrue over time to the Scottish Government, substantially bolstering the financial case for a transformational change in childcare provision.

[…]

The goal of this Scottish Government, therefore, is to deliver a transformation in the provision of high quality, early learning and childcare throughout Scotland.

*Our priorities for action*

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Parents in the UK face some of the highest childcare costs in Europe […] parents in Scotland still spend around 27 per cent of household income on childcare, compared to the OECD average of 12 per cent.

Independence will give us the opportunity to invest more in the supply of services, rather than subsidising demand. This is the approach adopted in the most successful countries and will ensure resources are spent most effectively, and that childcare becomes more affordable.

In an independent Scotland, this Government would develop a universal system of high quality early learning and childcare for children from the age of one to when they enter school.

We will:

* in our first budget: provide 600 hours of childcare to around half of Scotland’s two year olds. Those whose parents receive working tax credit or child tax credit will benefit
* by the end of the first Parliament: ensure that all three and four year olds and vulnerable two year olds will be entitled to 1,140 hours of childcare a year (the same amount of time as children spend in primary school)
* by the end of the second Parliament: ensure that all children from one to school age will be entitled to 1,140 hours of childcare per year

This transformational change to childcare in Scotland will allow parents, in particular women, to choose to work without worrying about the cost of looking after their children. With independence the benefits of their work – in economic growth and tax revenues – will stay in Scotland, contributing to meeting the cost of this childcare provision.

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Such a transformational extension in the provision of early learning and childcare will need to be introduced on a phased basis, in a way that is manageable and sustainable. This approach will need to be managed carefully and agreed with delivery partners.

It will be essential to maintain the highest quality provision in order to support child wellbeing and development; alongside providing significant support to families and sustainable employment opportunities. The universal provision will give children an entitlement to a minimum number of hours and, as now, parents will be able to access or purchase additional hours to support working patterns.

[…]

We plan to undertake a review of our cost structure, based on international examples, to ensure that our future investment in early learning and childcare achieves the best possible outcomes.

Capital investments will be required to build up the estate, both in terms of expansion of the current estate and new build, for stand-alone (nursery or daycare) provision to meet the needs of children before school, so that our children learn and are nurtured in high quality environments.

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Investment will also be required in training and to substantially increase the workforce. The expansion of childcare will provide around 35,000 new jobs. Investment will also cover regulation, inspection and ensure the quality of expanded provision through the functions of Education Scotland, the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Social Services Council.

Funded early learning and childcare will be part of a high quality universal system, with local authorities delivering and securing provision to ensure that education and quality are protected and improved. Building local authority provision, along with expansion within the third and private sectors, will contribute to the delivery of the highest quality provision.

**CHAPTER 6: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DEFENCE**

International development

p231

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are Millennium Development Goals in their own right. They are also critical to the delivery of other key development goals including in education and health. An independent Scotland will put gender equality at the heart of our development work.

Scotland’s international development programme will be delivered as part of an integrated approach to international relations. However, we will not allow commercial or other considerations, including military considerations, to influence our approach improperly.

**CHAPTER 7: JUSTICE, SECURITY AND HOME AFFAIRS**

Immigration

p269

The asylum process in an independent Scotland must be underpinned by an emphasis on robust, fair, socially-responsible and thorough decision-making, with clear adherence to human rights and equality principles and to the rule of law.

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An independent Scotland will have the opportunity for a new model of asylum services separate from immigration […] The process will be both robust and humane, and we will continue Scotland’s present approach of promoting the integration of refugees and asylum seekers from the day they arrive […] In an independent Scotland, we will close Dungavel, end the practice of dawn raids and inhumane treatment of those who have exercised their legitimate right to seek asylum […] If there is a need for forcible removals, these will be undertaken with respect for human rights. Independence will also afford the opportunity to address asylum seekers’ access to employment, education and accommodation.

**CHAPTER 10: BUILDING A MODERN DEMOCRACY**

*Including*

p332

* Independence will enable Scotland to build a modern, European democracy, founded on a written constitution, enshrining the fundamental rights and values that underpin our society and based on the principle of the sovereignty of the people of Scotland
* An independent Scotland will safeguard and strengthen Scotland’s equality and human rights framework, and maintain our existing strong commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights

Constitution, government and citizens

p352-353

A constitutional convention will ensure a participative and inclusive process where the people of Scotland, as well as politicians, civic society organisations, business interests, trade unions, local authorities and others, will have a direct role in shaping the constitution.

[…]

Key equality and human rights principles, including the requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), would be embedded in the written constitution. Beyond those there are certain provisions that the present Scottish Government will propose for consideration by the constitutional convention:

*(Including)*

* equality of opportunity and entitlement to live free of discrimination and prejudice
* entitlement to public services and to a standard of living that, as a minimum, secures dignity and self-respect and provides the opportunity for people to realise their full potential both as individuals and as members of wider society
* rights in relation to healthcare, welfare and pensions
* rights concerning other social and economic matters, such as the right to education and a Youth Guarantee on employment, education or training

Equality and human rights

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An independent Scotland will have at its heart the respect, protection and promotion of equality and human rights.

This will be enshrined in a written constitution to bind the institutions of the state and protect individuals and communities from abuses of power.

*Safeguarding equality and human rights in a written constitution*

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As well as allowing us to ensure that the rights in the European Convention on Human Rights are enshrined in a written constitution, independence gives Scotland the ability to consider whether other rights, such as those in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child should also be enshrined.

The principles written into the constitution will form an integral part of the structure of the country and will shape the development of future Scottish policy and systems – including those areas Scotland will inherit under independence such as welfare, employment and taxation – to deliver greater equality and social justice. This could, for example, create new ways to help families strike the right balance between paid work and care for older or younger people and potentially encourage more women into the workforce.

Equality in public life

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Scotland has made significant advances in increasing the diversity of representation in public life, but many groups – such as women, disabled people and ethnic minorities – are still not participating fully in the decision making of our country. We are missing talent and perspectives across our institutions and businesses. Increased diversity is good for business and good for the quality of decision-making.

The Scottish Government’s ambition is that appointments for which we are responsible should broadly reflect the wider population. We will continue our work to improve representation for all groups, and maintain our focus on improving the gender balance of public boards within current legislation.

If in government in an independent Scotland we will ensure that Scotland’s institutions have equality and diversity at the heart of their governance. We will expect public and private institutions to improve the diversity and gender balance of their governance. We will also consult on a target for women’s representation on company and public boards and, if necessary, we will legislate as appropriate.

Civic society and Third Sector

p368- 369

At the heart of any modern democracy should be the strong voice of its people, influencing the decisions that affect them.

[…]

Scotland’s Third Sector and civic institutions … inform and shape our public life and contribute to the development of the Government’s policies. Crucially, they bring the voices of communities into the public and political arena, providing diversity, richness and perspective to debates on the big issues facing Scotland. Civic groups and voluntary groups have been particularly important in shaping Scotland’s approach to major issues such as violence against women, community ownership and shifting attitudes on matters such as same sex marriage and independent living for disabled people.

**PART 5: Q&A**

**Finance and the economy**

**60. Will a living wage be introduced?**

[….]

This is part of the Scottish Government’s “social wage” – the contract between the people of Scotland and their Government. Our commitment to support the Scottish Living Wage for the duration of this Parliament is a decisive, long-term commitment to those on the lowest incomes. However, over 400,000 people in Scotland are working for less than the living wage and the majority of these are women.

**International development**

**302. Will an independent Scotland focus on gender equality as part of international development?**

Women and girls make up the majority of the world’s poor and bear a disproportionate share of the burden of poverty and responsibility for caring for others. This Government is doing everything we can to promote equality in Scotland and we would want an independent Scotland’s international policies to do the same.

**303. How will the focus on gender equality work in practice?**

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are United Nations MDGs in their own right. They are also critical to the delivery of other key development goals including in education and health. It would therefore be right for an independent Scotland to put gender equality at the heart of development work. The present Scottish Government would ensure that policies put in place will be in line with international commitments and recognised good practice on gender equality.

**Justice, security and home affairs**

**371. Will failed asylum seekers be forcibly removed?**

Our intention is to encourage voluntary return for failed asylum seekers wherever possible. However, we accept that there will be a need for some forced removal. Such operations will be undertaken in a sensitive and compassionate manner. There will be an end to dawn raids and a commitment not to forcibly remove vulnerable asylum seekers, such as young children or heavily pregnant women.

**Equality and Human Rights**

**611. Will there be a closer alignment between equality and human rights in an independent Scotland?**

Following independence, the current Scottish Government will explore the potential for closer alignment of the equality and human rights functions in Scotland, including the option of creating a single body in line with internationally recognised principles. However, any changes would require extensive consultation. They should also form part of a broader review of options for strengthening Scotland’s equality and human rights approach.

**614. Will becoming independent mean more equality across public appointments in Scotland?**

The current Scottish Government has already set itself an ambition that the appointments for which it is responsible should broadly reflect the wider community. As part of that we will maintain our focus on improving the gender balance of public boards which is limited by the constraints of current Westminster legislation.

In an independent Scotland we will ensure that Scotland’s institutions have equality and diversity at the heart of their governance. We will expect to see public and private institutions working to improve the diversity and gender balance of their governance.

**ANNEX D**

Equality considerations

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Scotland’s strong commitment to equality is reflected in this guide to an independent Scotland. It is an integral part of our vision for a modern, democratic Scotland. It underpins our aspirations for a society which is fair and just and informs our ambitions for a dynamic successful nation, caring for its people and resources and occupying its place in the world.

[…]

We will have in Scotland all the powers we need to ensure equality of opportunity in the workplace including, for example, improved representation for women in leadership roles at board level in companies.

[…]

Being independent will mean we can deliver important advantages for people across Scottish society, with women seeing some of the clearest gains. For older women, a Scottish pension will have a guaranteed triple lock increase protecting its value beyond 2015 (when the triple lock comes to an end in the UK). Entitlement based on a spouse’s contribution will also be maintained.

[…]

For parents with young families, independence will allow us to deliver a transformational change in early years education and childcare. This will cut childcare costs and make it easier for mothers to enter the labour market.

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