



A GENDER EDIT of *TOGETHER WE CAN*

This document is a 'gender edit' guide to the Scottish Labour party's 'red paper' which sets out its case for a 'no vote' in the referendum. It extracts passages that refer directly to gender and women, or where there are clear implications for women and girls in Scotland.

Intro

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Its core values of solidarity, equality and social justice remain as true today as they were in April 1888 when Keir Hardie stood in the mid-Lanark by-election on a platform of an 8-hour working day, political rights for women, and home rule for Scotland.

Procurement

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[Procurement] should be used to extend the living wage into the private sector for employees working on public contracts where possible and deliver a positive employment agenda, including banning the use of exploitative zero hour contracts and equality at work for women.

Public procurement should also be used to support skills development and benefit small businesses and the third sector by creating a level playing field. It should boost local economies by ensuring that products are sourced locally where possible.

Supporting parents into work

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We recognise that childcare is not just an issue for women; it affects both parents, and, increasingly, grandparents. However, caring responsibilities still mean more women find it difficult to get into work than men.

Working patterns have changed with fewer people working a traditional nine-to-five day, so childcare needs to be more flexible. It must also be affordable, so that no one is prevented from being able to provide for their family because of cost.

And investment in childcare will bring a significant return for the whole country, as it boosts economic activity.

NHS

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Given the connection between Attendance Allowance and health and social care policies, we believe it should be devolved in full to the Scottish Parliament.

There are 140,000 older people in Scotland who currently receive this benefit. It is paid to severely disabled people over 65 years old who need help with their personal care. Devolving this power gives the Scottish Parliament the ability to shape a distinctive social care package for those who need it.

The pressure on Scotland's care workforce will increase too. There are around 65,000 people working in the sector. Most are women. Most are employed by private providers with many earning the minimum wage.

All are hard-working and dedicated, but are coming under increasing pressure to deliver a service that is, at best, limited, and, at worst, failing.

Care workers are having to cut back on important tasks to meet time constraints, are often not paid for travel between clients, so, in reality, earn below the minimum wage. We can do better than this.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the thousands of unpaid carers - mothers, daughters, sons, husbands - who dedicate their lives to caring for family members; often a great personal and financial cost.

Social security

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We recognise that a UK social security system must always respect and look out for those who cannot do paid work due to illness or disability. Over the coming months, Labour's Work and Pensions team will deliver their plans for better, targeted support, for everyone who needs it, from single parents to disabled people.

While we believe that social security should remain reserved, we recognise there is potential for some devolution to ensure better integration between devolved and reserved responsibilities.

Education

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Labour is proud to have introduced programmes such as Active Schools and Club Golf for young people, but much more needs to be done. In particular we must ensure that active and fun opportunities to take part in sport or physical activity are available for everyone, regardless of age, gender or ability.

Communities

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We also believe that local government is best placed to support people making the, sometimes difficult, transition from unemployment back to work. This is why we will give councils a key new role in co-commissioning the work programme as part of plans to deliver it at a more local level.

Currently, the Work Programme is uniform across the UK. Under our plans, it can be shaped to best meet the needs of local communities and reflect local labour market conditions.

Labour, in working with the Scottish people, will explore a range of ideas and interventions that will help reduce poverty and inequality.

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Alcohol is a major factor in anti-social and criminal behaviour, from relatively low-level offences such as drunkenness and disorder to serious crimes such as domestic abuse, sexual assault and violence. It is a telling statistic that half of all prisoners and 77 per cent of young offenders were drunk at the time of their offence.

[...]

We will only create safe and prosperous communities if everyone who lives in them practices tolerance and respect. We want our communities to be free from prejudice, whether that is sectarianism, racism or sexism.

Labour is proud of its record in equalities legislation, and we have long championed progressive changes in attitudes across the UK. The time is now right for the Scottish Parliament to decide how best to enforce equality laws in devolved areas of policy.

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We have made significant strides in gender equality in the last fifty years – but there is more to do. Our parliament, our council chambers and our public bodies should reflect society. Scottish Labour took the bold step in 1999 of ensuring equal representation among its candidates for the new parliament, and we will ensure that, in Labour, 50 per cent of our candidates at the next Scottish Parliament elections are women.

We will continue to work towards reflecting that in our council chambers and we will extend our party's principles to our public bodies too, and ensure that there is equal representation on all public boards.

International

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Even a modest level of the “Robin Hood tax” applied at a global level could generate sufficient revenue to make a real impact on climate change, help women and girls in developing countries get the education and health services they need to flourish, and tackle the diseases such as malaria and HIV/Aids that kill millions every year.