



BUILD BACK EQUAL **HOLYROOD 2021**

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FOREWORD

This election, we are choosing the Parliament that will be in charge of Scotland’s recovery from coronavirus. Nobody has been left unaffected by the pandemic. Many thousands of Scots have lost loved ones, their own health, their jobs, their financial security. The poorest and most vulnerable are so often women, in particular ethnic minority women and women with disabilities, and they have been hit the hardest.

Everyone agrees we need to build back better. The Women’s Equality Party says we need to do more than that – we need to Build Back Equal. The pandemic has laid bare the inequalities in our society and made many of them worse. If we are to Build Back Equal, then we need to rethink how our communities work. We need a new Scottish Parliament which is not afraid of radical change.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - REIMAGINING SCOTLAND

WE want to create a thriving Scotland which is socially just and environmentally safe. Scotland is globally admired as a founding member nation of the Wellbeing Economy Governments Group, and rightly so. At the Women's Equality Party, we understand that the false separation of formal and informal economies and non-valued natural environment prizes financial growth (GDP) at the expense of our people and our planet. Instead, Scotland is choosing a different path. We are measuring the success of our nation based on the health and happiness of its people, and on our ability to create an environmentally safe society.

But Scotland is trying to achieve a wellbeing economy within the context of coronavirus, which is compounding years of austerity, increasing the inequalities in our society and inevitably harming our planet as a result. The impact on female and minority ethnic dominated sectors like hospitality, retail and care continues to be profound. The services that enable women's labour market participation, in particular the participation of women with disabilities, were put on hold for months. And the restrictions designed to keep us safe in our own homes have in fact put many women at even greater risk of harm.

We have taken several steps backwards on the road to gender equality these past twelve months; a shift that will slow us down in meeting our climate change targets. Without a radical change in our approach to economic stimulus and policymaking, the clock will be turned back even further and everyone will feel the effects. The only way to flourish in this context is to do things differently and do them better. We don't underestimate the challenge, but we do know the solutions.

For too long progress has been framed by traditional economic ideas based around the lives of men. We are making some progress in Scotland in trying to reframe our economy around the wellbeing of our citizens and our planet. But it still took a global pandemic for social care workers to receive a living wage. Scotland continues to lag behind the rest of the UK in the provision of funded childcare, and domestic abuse remains the leading cause of women's homelessness.

WE recognise that women's financial and economic independence is crucial to achieving gender equality. Eliminating the persistent pay gaps in our society, including gender, ethnicity, and disability gaps, will be a huge step towards achieving equality and will also significantly boost our economy. Society's secrecy around pay and reward allows discrimination to thrive and is therefore not compatible with ambitions for a wellbeing economy. So to eliminate pay gaps we must have pay transparency. That is why WE are calling on the Scottish Government to introduce legislation on full pay transparency in the public sector.

Moreover, it is not enough to say that Scotland will measure the wellbeing of its people, if the existing gender barriers to achieving positive wellbeing and a good standard of living are not being addressed. WE will not only assess the impact of all government policy on women, disadvantaged groups and the environment, but WE will also seek to implement gendered wellbeing indicators. This will enable us to take an inclusive and intersectional approach which recognises that men and women, as well as minority ethnic people, people with disabilities and LGBT+ people all experience differing levels of wellbeing.

WE will also push for the next Scottish Government to convene an annual citizens' assembly, to scrutinise the draft Scottish Budget and make recommendations for change before it is passed into law. Without a deliberate effort to extend power to a more diverse cross-section of Scottish society, the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament will not be able to remove the intersecting barriers of inequality,

including gender, that prevent us from becoming a truly successful nation.

A more inclusive approach to democracy and a sustainable economy are necessary to help our planet. The causes of climate change are inextricably linked to traditional economic systems, which exploit the environment and women's work to maximise profit. In turn, the impacts of climate change disproportionately affect the poorest people and the poorest places, and particularly women. Yet women are excluded from developing the solutions. Women's voices, priorities, knowledge, ideas, and lived experiences must help shape climate action. Any attempt to address the climate crisis without women will exacerbate inequality.

WE will lobby to reinstate international aid to the poorest countries immediately to support gender-just climate resilience actions. WE will demand equal representation at COP26, which is taking place in Glasgow this year, moving

beyond symbolic representation to enable women's voices and interests to shape the agenda and outcomes. Finally, WE will push for a global Ecocide law to hold international polluters to account, who also drive poverty and violence over scarcity of resources, disproportionately impacting women.

The Women's Equality Party has undertaken an audit of its eight objectives, to understand how they link with climate and how we can embed climate justice across all our policy areas. This is different from other political parties that have a separate climate or green policy which is often in conflict with other areas. WE recognise the clear synergies between gender equality, wellbeing and climate justice: more equal representation results in greener policies; investment in social infrastructure offsets the carbon from high emissions sectors; and a safer environment relieves one driver of violence against women and girls.



BUILD BACK EQUAL - ACTIONS

In order to Build Back Equal, WE are calling for action across four key areas: the economy, caring infrastructure, ending violence against women and girls and physical infrastructure (housing and transport).

Reimagining Scotland

WE believe in creating a socially just and environmentally safe nation. WE will:

- Introduce legislation on full pay transparency in the public sector
- Assess the impact of all government policy on women, disadvantaged groups and the environment, and implement gendered wellbeing indicators
- Convene an annual citizens' assembly, to scrutinise the draft Scottish Budget and make recommendations for change before it is passed into law
- Lobby to reinstate international aid to the poorest countries immediately to support gender-just climate resilience actions
- Demand equal representation at COP26, which is taking place in Glasgow this year
- Push for a global Ecocide law to hold international polluters to account

Build A Care-Led Recovery

WE believe in the transformative power of childcare. WE will:

- Lobby for universal free childcare, so every child has access to a quality early learning experience and to level up women's opportunities with men's
- Extend the expansion of funded childcare to two year olds within the next parliamentary term
- Call for the UK Government to bail out the childcare sector, and for the next Scottish Government to ring-fence any bailout funding for operational costs
- Seek to increase the funding rates offered to partner providers by local authorities
- Legislate to permanently exempt nurseries and after school clubs from business rates

WE believe social care is a fundamental human right and a crucial part of our infrastructure. WE will:

- Make social care free at the point of use for everyone, by creating a National Care Service
- Align social care pay and conditions with those in the NHS to help to narrow the gender and ethnicity pay gaps and turn social work into a secure employment choice
- Introduce a Representation Standard for all current and future health and social care bodies, both local and national, increasing participation of minoritised people in the decisions that affect their lives
- Extend the Carers' Allowance Supplement and make it available to all unpaid carers in Scotland, regardless of income and hours spent caring
- Lobby the UK Government to increase Carers' Allowance across the UK to at least the Real Living Wage
- Improve the availability of respite care for carers, by including its provision within a newly established National Care Service.

Build Back to End Violence

WE believe Scotland should be a Sanctuary State for all women. WE will:

- Prioritise a new funding structure for domestic abuse services which provides funding on an adequate, stable and sustainable basis
- Protect minimum funding for core services in legislation, so no women and children are left without specialist support, as is the case in North Lanarkshire
- Review refuge provision across Scotland, and promote the development of 'by and for' services for minoritised people and women with disabilities
- Introduce a homelessness prevention duty for survivors of domestic abuse, to ensure that local and national government is held to account in its delivery of appropriate and inclusive housing for survivors
- Lobby the UK and Scottish Governments to overhaul Universal Credit, including drastically increasing the value of the award and abolishing sanctions

- Introduce a domestic abuse support fund to bridge the gap between leaving and first payment
- Prioritise the development and publication of an Anti-Destitution Strategy, which will support women with no recourse to public funds to access the support they need if they have experienced trauma and abuse
- Call for immediate funding of refuge space for women and children with no recourse to public funds

WE believe that violence is not inevitable, it is preventable. WE will:

- Change the law on consent, so it is based on some measure of expressive or participative affirmation - that is to say, each individual chooses to engage voluntarily in sex and expresses that positive choice verbally or through another form of communication and each individual proactively seeks consent
- Call for a national public campaign on consent, to promote a culture shift in tandem with a change in the law
- Push for the introduction of subject specific Personal and Social Education (PSE) teachers and specialist programmes for the teaching of consent in primary schools.

WE believe women deserve justice. WE will:

- Support the Misogyny and Criminal Justice in Scotland Working Group and its remit to consider where there are gaps in the law that prevent women from reporting and accessing justice
- End the not proven verdict, which is a second acquittal verdict that is disproportionately used in cases of rape and attempted rape
- Push for a pilot of judge only trials for cases of rape and attempted rape to take place as a matter of urgency
- Increase investment in rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators, so they never abuse, harass, assault or rape again

Build Back Inclusive

WE believe in a woman's fundamental right to safe, secure and affordable housing. WE will:

- Lobby to extend the membership of homelessness and housing policy and strategy groups, so that they include women with experience of housing insecurity and gender expertise
- Call for a review of all existing homelessness and housing strategies to understand how Equality Impact Assessments have affected Scotland's approach to housing, and make improvements where necessary
- Improve the security of women's existing housing options

by making the ban on winter evictions permanent, introducing caps on annual rent increases and giving single parents priority on local authority and Registered Social Landlord housing lists

WE believe that Scotland's housing solutions must be inclusive. WE will:

- Push for the development of 55,000 homes across all tenure types over the next five years, 50% of which will be affordable and 50% of which will be social rented
- Lobby to maintain the level of social rented homes built by the end of 2026, to help housing stock return to a sustainable level
- Seek to end commuted payments from developers for affordable housing, as well as off-site provision of affordable housing, to prevent housing segregation and support Registered Social Landlords to purchase land for development
- Update the Scottish Government's Local Housing Strategy guidance and its wheelchair accessible target for local authorities, so that they reflect the wide range of inclusive housing solutions needed across all tenure types
- Push for 25% of Scotland's existing social housing stock to be retrofitted to increase energy efficiency, prioritising households currently living in fuel poverty
- Introduce a Utilities Support Fund for people at risk of being cut off

WE believe that our transport infrastructure should meet the needs of the majority. WE will:

- Commission an audit of women's travel patterns across Scotland and charge the National Transport Strategy Delivery Board (NTS2) with the task of acting on its recommendations
- Prioritise improving the representation of minoritised and minority women within our transport authorities as a matter of urgency, to address the clear knowledge gap in this sector
- Involve women's advocacy organisations in the development of the next Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)
- Expedite the introduction of a national smart ticketing system so it is fully operational by 2026, which drives down prices for trip-chaining so that women are not indirectly discriminated against because of their travel patterns
- Push for the NTS2 Delivery Board to work with local authorities and transport operators to make transport more inclusive

- Call for local communities and disability organisations to be consulted on the introduction of Low Traffic Networks (LTNs) and develop a plan to introduce LTNs where they will benefit all residents
- Ensure an intersectional approach is taken in the development of green transport solutions, so everyone can access these solutions on an equal basis and no one is indirectly discriminated against

The Women's Equality Party has seven core policy areas: Equal Pay and Opportunity, Equal Education, Equal Parenting & Caregiving, Equal Representation, Equal Health, Equal Media, and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls. You can find more about our objectives at www.womensequality.org.uk.



BUILD A CARE-LED RECOVERY

This year we have witnessed firsthand the importance of caring roles, many of which are unpaid, to the functioning of society. Support workers, unpaid carers, care home workers, parents and the many other carers across our country have provided a lifeline of support, alleviating the profound distress that coronavirus has caused to so many.

Yet care continues to be undervalued, un(der)paid and underappreciated. Why? Because caring is mostly carried out by women. The social and economic undervaluation of care is a cause and consequence of gender inequality, trapping many women in a cycle of poverty that they cannot leave. Scotland claims to be a wellbeing economy nation, prioritising the health and happiness of its citizens over GDP, but until we start valuing care this will only ever be an ambition.

That is why our plans are transformative. WE understand that without the 1.1 million unpaid carers (61% of whom are women), whose work has an estimated value of £36 billion, Scotland would grind to a halt.^{1,2} WE understand that properly funded social infrastructure isn't a drain on our economy, but actually generates economic growth while supporting the wellbeing of citizens. It's time to build an economic plan around care; care for our children, and care for a better quality of life for our elders and Scots with disabilities. Care is the glue that holds society together, enabling citizens to lead full and productive lives.

A new deal for childcare

WE believe in the transformative power of childcare. Quality early years provision helps to decrease the inequalities between children. The first 1000 days of a child's life are critical for brain development and a child's future success. That is why our national policy is for universal free childcare, because every child should have the opportunity to access a quality early learning experience in a formal setting that supports them to thrive. WE will lobby the UK Government and next Scottish Government for this transformative investment, which will also level up women's prospects with men's and narrow the gender pay gap.

The current approach to childcare views it as a logistical problem to be solved, rather than an investment in our

children and in women. Often stressful and always precarious, only one unexpected appointment, late shift or unavailable grandparent and the carefully constructed system collapses. And that's before a pandemic that exposed exactly how shaky the childcare foundations for parents and providers are. Our childcare system fails parents, childcare workers and children. The very three groups who should be benefiting from it.

Currently, Scotland is lagging behind the rest of the UK when it comes to early learning. Despite a commitment to increase the availability of funded childcare to 30 hours per week, bringing Scotland in line with England and Wales, many local authorities only provide 16 hours. The delay in rolling out this expansion due to coronavirus, while understandable in many ways, has had devastating consequences for families and the childcare workforce.

1. Oxfam, Unpaid care work worth £36bn in Scotland, January 2020
2. Carers UK, Carer's Week 2020: Research Report, June 2020

For years now, families across Scotland have been experiencing a postcode lottery of services. Some are losing up to £4,500 every year because their local authority does not provide more than 16 hours of funded childcare per week.³ Other children and young people - in particular minority ethnic children and young people - are completely losing out on a valuable learning experience, because it simply doesn't make economic sense for some parents to pay for unfunded hours or after school care in order to work.⁴ And when the economics don't work out, it is women that lose out. Regardless of whether you have children or choose to use childcare, this matters, because equality matters.

Not being able to access affordable and flexible childcare is the most immediate barrier to women's employment, education and training. Women are four times more likely than men to engage in part-time work and four times more likely to give up employment completely in order to undertake unpaid care.⁵ Coronavirus has only increased unpaid caring responsibilities for women, who carried out around 68% of childcare during the pandemic.⁶ We also know that unpaid caring is associated with higher levels of poverty, with couples with dependent children, single mothers and ethnic minority parents more likely to experience economic deprivation.^{7,8} Childcare is therefore critical infrastructure, just like our roads, energy supply and health service. It enables women to work, which in turn alleviates poverty, generates more taxes and results in more expenditure in local communities, boosting the economy.

WE will extend the expansion of funded childcare to two year olds within the next parliamentary term, regardless of whether the parents and carers of two year olds are working or not. WE believe every child should have the opportunity to engage in early learning through a formal childcare setting, and recognise that this opportunity is needed now more than ever, as children have experienced a year of significantly reduced social contact. WE will therefore continue to expand the provision of funded childcare, starting with two year olds, until WE achieve universal free provision. We do not underestimate the difficulties of achieving quality universal free childcare within the current market, which is why we also need to sustainably support the sector and its workforce.

Coronavirus has brought the childcare sector to its knees, with many private and third sector nursery providers having closed their doors permanently. Some spent thousands of pounds on expansions to meet the additional capacity that was expected with the roll out of 30 hours funded childcare, only for this to be delayed. Brand new nursery settings went

unused, while providers were also forced to increase their practitioner to child ratio, resulting in additional running costs at a time when they were relying solely on government funding. Those nursery practitioners who did continue to provide care at such a critical time did so without Personal Protective Equipment for too long, with many receiving below the Real Living Wage.

The effect of this on women is profound. Women make up 96% of the childcare workforce in Scotland, meaning the income losses over the past 12 months will result in a disproportionate amount of potential job losses for women.⁹ While the Nursery Rates Relief scheme and furlough have helped providers across the country, the financial effect of the pandemic will make it even more difficult for them to meet the Real Living Wage, not least because local authorities are offering rates based on an outdated business model.¹⁰ All of this will contribute to turning back the clock on gender equality, increasing the employment and pay gap between men and women.

WE are calling for the UK Government to bail out the childcare sector, and for the next Scottish Government to ring-fence any bailout funding for operational costs. WE will also seek to increase the funding rates offered to partner providers by local authorities, to prevent the costs associated with meeting the Real Living Wage being passed onto parents. Finally, WE will legislate to permanently exempt nurseries and after school clubs from business rates, in recognition of the critical role childcare plays in enabling women's employment, self-employment and education.

Valuing Social Care

For years social care has been neglected by governments that consistently see it as a drain on public funding instead of a fundamental basic human right, enabling people to live their full potential and engage in civic society on their terms. It is also a crucial part of our infrastructure, facilitating employment, self-employment, training and education for many thousands of Scots. Yet it is still viewed as something we consume - something we take away from the economy - as opposed to an investment in people.

With a workforce that is 83% female and up to 24% ethnic minority, the current failure to invest in adult social care in Scotland has a direct impact on equality.¹¹ The commitment from Scottish Government to increase pay for the lowest paid social care workers to at least the Real Living Wage is, without a doubt, welcome. But it took a global pandemic for this to happen. And still the undervaluing of caring was made

evident through the lack of Personal Protective Equipment at a time of crisis, and poor conditions that left many care workers no choice but to work while they were sick. We need to go further than simply increasing wages in order to address the decades long chronic undervaluation of social care, which has not only contributed to the gender and ethnicity pay gaps, but also the disability pay gap.

People with a disability in Scotland are twice as likely to be unemployed and three times more likely to live in poverty.¹² A sustainably and adequately funded social care support system would help the thousands of Scots with disabilities - who are more women than men - into education, training, employment and self-employment, giving them the equal opportunity that is their fundamental human right and resulting in economic benefit through increased income for individuals and taxes for the state.¹³ For people with a disability who do not engage in formal education, training and employment, social care remains a fundamental human right, reducing health inequalities, alleviating poverty and empowering people to participate in civic life. However, despite its importance to society, it was predicted that Scotland would experience a £1.8 billion shortfall in health and social care funding by 2035.¹⁴ This projected shortfall will now likely increase as a result of the long-term health implications of coronavirus, which are expected to affect hundreds if not thousands of people in Scotland.

Coronavirus has also caused a displacement of adult social care support from services into people's homes. Research by Glasgow Disability Alliance has shown that individuals have had their social care packages reduced or stopped completely, as a direct result of the pandemic.¹⁵ Subsequently, some Health and Social Care Partnerships have increased the thresholds for receiving social care, making it even harder for people with a disability and older people to access the support they need to have a good standard of living.¹⁶ This all amounts to an effective reduction in investment. Regardless of whether it was intended or not, the consequences remain the same: more people with a disability and older people than ever are living without support, and more people than ever are taking on unpaid caring - most of them women.

Before coronavirus around 16% of Scots were unpaid carers, but this has increased by around 9%.¹⁷ Currently an estimated 1.1 million people in Scotland are unpaid carers, 61% of whom are women.¹⁸ Not only does unpaid caring prevent many women from entering employment, self-employment and education, but it can also take a huge toll on a person's mental and physical health. Research by Carers UK showed that carers found the health impact one of the most challenging aspects of caring, second only to managing the stress and responsibility.¹⁹ Many people proactively choose to be a carer and enjoy supporting other individuals, whether it's family or friends, but for too long their commitment has been taken advantage of, with little value placed on their contribution to our society.

We need a radical new approach to social care, both paid and unpaid, if we are to achieve gender equality and equality for people with a disability and older people. That is why WE will make social care free at the point of use for everyone, by creating a National Care Service. This will ensure that everyone who needs social care support can access it, regardless of their age, circumstances and disability. It will shift the onus of care from households to state funded services, narrowing the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps as more women and people with a disability can choose to engage in employment, self-employment, education and training.

As part of the move to a nationalised service, WE will align social care pay and conditions with those in the NHS. This will help to narrow the gender and ethnicity pay gaps further and will also turn social work into a secure employment choice for both women and men, alleviating in-work poverty and improving the quality of support as a result of better working conditions. WE will also introduce a Representation Standard for all current and future health and social care bodies, both local and national. This will improve representation, increasing participation of minoritised people in the decisions that affect their lives. This representation will not be tokenistic or piecemeal, it will come with a right to vote and actively participate in decision making. Co-design and co-production will never be a reality in health and social care until we improve representation across all decision making bodies.

3. Scottish Government, Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare – Reinstatement of 1140 statutory duty - Business and Regulatory Impact Assessment (BRIA), January 2021
4. Scottish Government, Tackling child poverty: first year progress report - Annex C, June 2019
5. Engender and Close the Gap, Gender and Economic Recovery, May 2020
6. Engender, Gender and Unpaid Work, July 2020
7. Oxfam, Unpaid care work worth £36bn in Scotland, January 2020
8. Scottish Government, Tackling child poverty: first year progress report - Annex C, June 2019
9. Scottish Government, Encouraging more men into childcare, October 2018
10. NDNA, Most LAs paying unit cost identified in Scottish Govt Financial Review

11. Scottish Social Services Council, Scottish Social Service Sector: Report on 2019 Workforce, August 2019
12. Glasgow Disability Alliance, Manifesto for Equality Now, 2021
13. National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, Monthly Spotlight: Disability
14. Audit Scotland, NHS in Scotland 2019, October 2019
15. Glasgow Disability Alliance, GDA's Covid-resilience engagement and response, April 2020
16. ALLIANCE, Response to Equality and Human Rights Committee inquiry on the impact of Covid-19, 2020
17. Carers UK, Carer's Week 2020: Research Report, June 2020
18. Carers UK, Carer's Week 2020: Research Report, June 2020
19. Carers UK, Carer's Week 2020: Research Report, June 2020

As part of our transformative agenda to a true wellbeing economy, which recognises both the economic and social value of unpaid caring, WE will extend the Carers' Allowance Supplement and make it available to all unpaid carers in Scotland, regardless of income and hours spent caring. WE will also lobby the UK Government to increase Carers' Allowance across the UK to at least the Real Living Wage. While our plans for a National Care Service will result in a substantial shift in care from households to services, there will always be people who want to care for their loved ones and whose loved one would prefer to be cared for by their family and friends. In these situations, a Real Living Wage must be provided as a minimum. Finally, WE will improve the availability of respite care for carers, by including its provision within a newly established National Care Service.



BUILD BACK TO END VIOLENCE

Ending male violence against women has to be a political priority. To Build Back Equal we must end violence, not just manage it. Women will never be truly equal until all male violence against women has ended. It is a stain on our society that women can be murdered, raped, assaulted, abused and oppressed because of their gender. No woman is free until she is safe: by diminishing women's freedom to participate in their societies, violence against women and girls acts as one of the most pervasive barriers to gender equality.

Making Scotland a Sanctuary State

Coronavirus and the accompanying lockdown has exacerbated an existing pandemic of male violence. While our government told us that our homes were the safest place for us to be, organisations supporting survivors had to emphasise that for many women and partners, lockdown meant being locked in with an abuser. The national domestic abuse helpline (UK wide) reported an 80% increase in calls in the first three months of lockdown, as the restrictions designed to keep us safe were weaponised by abusers to exert control over their partners.²⁰

Undoubtedly Scotland has made significant progress in supporting survivors of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 was a ground-breaking piece of legislation that was informed by women and children's experiences and, as such, has their fundamental human rights at its core. Nonetheless, one in four women and one in five children experience domestic abuse, which remains the leading cause of women's homelessness in Scotland.²¹ Without a doubt, we can do more. It is crucial that women can exercise their right under the Equality Act 2010 to access specialist services, and WE support the continued funding of Women's Aid and other specialist support services across Scotland. But we need a new funding structure for specialist domestic abuse support services, to meet rising demand and ensure their sustainability.

Between April 2019 and March 2020, 65% of Women's Aid services saw an increase in demand. Yet, over the same

period, 81% reported a real time cut to their funding from local authorities, 36% had the same or less money in their budgets that the year before and 39% had to use their emergency financial reserves.²² And for the first time in decades, a Scottish local authority failed to renew its funding for specialist services for survivors of domestic abuse, effectively stripping this service of its resources. North Lanarkshire is now the only place in Scotland to not fund specialist domestic abuse support, leaving local women and children vulnerable to continued abuse in the midst of a pandemic.²³ This was a direct result of a competitive tender process, and demonstrates clearly why competitive tendering is not appropriate for services that provide a lifeline to people experiencing gender based violence.

Competitive tendering and inadequate resourcing also means that disabled, minority ethnic, transgender, lesbian and bisexual women are further disadvantaged. While purpose-built refuges are accessible to women with disabilities, these are not available across Scotland. This can leave many women with disabilities experiencing abuse feeling even more trapped, acting as a barrier to getting support. It also forces services to find alternatives to specialist refuge accommodation, potentially resulting in a poorer quality of service for women with disabilities. Women with disabilities are also less likely to be identified by services as a survivor of domestic abuse, as our culture perpetuates the idea that people with a disability do not have intimate relationships. This inadequacy of provision needs addressed as a matter of urgency, as women

20. BBC, Coronavirus: Domestic abuse helpline sees lockdown surge, July 2020
21. Scottish Government, Homelessness in Scotland: Equalities Breakdown 2019 to 2020, November 2020

22. Scottish Women's Aid, Open letter: Helping women, children and young people to safety and freedom from abuse
23. Scottish Women's Aid, Letter to North Lanarkshire Council, March 2021

with disabilities are twice as likely as non-disabled women to experience gender based violence, including domestic abuse, sexual assault and rape.²⁴

Women’s Aid services across Scotland support lesbian, bisexual and transgender women who have experienced domestic abuse. One in four lesbian and bisexual women have experienced domestic abuse, the same proportion as women overall, while up to 80% of transgender people have experienced abusive behaviour by a partner.²⁵ However, inadequate funding, stigma and the framing of domestic abuse in our culture as a heterosexual problem, can all act as barriers to support.²⁶ While Scotland has a LGBT+ domestic abuse helpline, there are no support services specifically for lesbian and bisexual women, or transgender women. Many lesbian and bisexual women feel comfortable using existing support services, but many may not, and research indicates that only 7% of transgender people who experienced domestic abuse in Scotland then went on to access specialist domestic abuse support. We also know that there is under-reporting of abuse within the LGBT+ community and that commissioning does not always deliver inclusive services.²⁷

There are also only 13 refuge spaces in Scotland that are provided by specialist services for Black and minority ethnic women and these are both in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Barriers like religious and cultural stigma, and language are difficult to overcome if a service has not been designed to meet the needs of different minority ethnic women. The then Scottish Executive highlighted a severe shortage of specialist domestic abuse support services for Black and minority ethnic women as long ago as 2004, yet little has been done to improve provision.²⁸ Migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women with no recourse to public funds are also actively discriminated against, as they are prevented from accessing domestic abuse and other crucial public services as a direct result of the UK Government’s hostile immigration policy. Currently, very few Women’s Aid services can cover the costs of a woman’s stay in refuge without access to welfare benefits. However, this does not prevent the Scottish Government from developing pathways to support for women with no recourse to public funds, so that no woman is turned away.

It is clear that the current funding structure for domestic abuse services in Scotland is not working. Local authorities are cutting funding or, as we have seen, withdrawing it completely. Competitive tendering puts specialist services at risk and means there is a dearth of support for minoritised people who face specific barriers to getting help. WE will prioritise a new funding structure for domestic abuse services, working with

specialist organisations that support survivors and survivors themselves to develop a new model of adequate, stable and sustainable funding. WE will also push for minimum funding for core services to be protected in legislation, so no women and children are left without specialist support. To support the delivery of increased provision to meet demand WE will review refuge provision across Scotland, and promote the development of ‘by and for’ services for ethinc minority women, lesbian and bisxual women, transgender women and women with disabilities.

WE will also introduce a homelessness prevention duty for survivors of domestic abuse, to ensure that local and national government is held to account in its delivery of adequate and appropriate housing for survivors. This duty must include a statutory requirement for social landlords and letting agents to have a domestic abuse housing policy that seeks to prevent women’s homelessness and support women who experience domestic abuse. It must also include a statutory requirement for frontline public sector housing staff, and staff of social landlords and letting agents to have training in domestic abuse and gender-based violence, so they can play their part in identifying and supporting survivors.

WE will lobby the UK and Scottish Governments to overhaul Universal Credit, including drastically increasing the value of the award and abolishing sanctions. In the immediate term, WE will introduce a domestic abuse support fund to bridge the gap between leaving and first Universal Credit payment, which must be easily accessible and widely advertised. This will support survivors of domestic abuse to get access to refuge space as soon as they need it and meet essential living costs after leaving. WE will also prioritise the development and publication of an Anti-Destitution Strategy, which will support women with no recourse to public funds to access the support they need if they have experienced trauma and abuse. As part of this Strategy, WE will call for the Scottish Government to immediately fund refuge space for women and children with no recourse to public funds.

No woman should be turned away from support. No woman should be left homeless because of abuse. It is time to make Scotland a Sanctuary State.

It’s time to end gender-based violence

Making Scotland a Sanctuary State is only one of our ambitions. The other is to end violence against women and girls in Scotland. And that requires a fundamental shift in our approach, from managing the problem to preventing it happening in the first place. Women’s organisations across

Scotland do fantastic prevention work. But in the context of funding cuts to women’s services, prevention work is often scrapped in order to keep essential services going. It is clearly not enough to rely on the behavior change and education programmes run by a handful of service providers, resulting in a patchwork of provision. We need a state-wide approach to prevention that prioritises a fundamental cultural change.

Our laws should reflect the behaviours we expect from one another. We expect each other to be sober when driving, so we do not cause an accident on the road. We expect each other to not smoke in public places, so we do not damage each other’s health. We expect each other to not hit children, so we do not trigger childhood trauma. Yet the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009 tells us that rape is OK if the perpetrator has ‘reasonable belief’ that they were given consent.²⁹ Our law effectively legalises rape if someone assumed consent and that assumption is considered ‘reasonable’.

It is easy to see how our law is perpetuating harmful stereotypes about women ‘bringing it on themselves’ or ‘asking for it’. And, of course, these stereotypes play out in the courtroom for the minority of women who get there. It is down to juries to decide if an alleged perpetrator’s belief in consent was ‘reasonable’. Yet no definition of ‘reasonable’ is provided, meaning that juries are at at risk of basing their verdict on rape myths and setereotypes about women. We live in a society where women are viewed as responsible for their own safety and, therefore, responsible for the violence they experience. Indeed, the law on sexual violence frames consent as the sole responsibility of the survivor. It is therefore not possible to expect juries, made up of individual citizens, to come to an unbiased decision about ‘reasonable belief’. Consent is about choices, the choice to engage in sex, the choice not to engage sex and the choice to disengage from sex. Women are stripped of that choice by our law, which gives men the green light to make assumptions about a woman’s desire to engage in sex based on language, behaviour, clothing and sexual history.

That is why WE are determined to change the law on consent, so it is based on a measure of expressive or participative affirmation - that is to say, each individual chooses to engage voluntarily in sex and expresses that positive choice verbally or through another form of communication. It would also require

people engaging in sex to proactively seek consent from each other. This is sometimes referred to as an affirmative consent law and it would change the culture of consent across our country, from classrooms to courtrooms. It reframes receiving consent as the responsibility of each individual engaging in sex. This will encourage healthy conversations and education about consent and boundaries. In court it would mean that prosecuting parties would no longer have to focus on proof of absence of consent (e.g. resistance), but would be able to focus on establishing if consent was sought in the first place.

Changing the law on consent would also support a wider cultural shift, if it is introduced alongside a national public campaigning effort on consent. We have an excellent track record of public health and safety campaigning in the UK, including campaigns to end drink driving and reduce smoking. We need to apply that same national effort to ending violence against women and girls by launching a national campaign on consent to work in tandem with a change in the law. Affirmative consent is only the first in a series of steps that will improve our justice system for survivors of sexual violence, and help to end violence against women.

Education and early intervention is also crucial to changing our culture on consent. In secondary schools PSE is taught by teachers who either have capacity within their timetable or have chosen to take on a guidance role in addition to their subject teaching. Teachers across primary and secondary schools are expected to educate children and young people with confidence despite limited resources and a lack of knowledge on crucial topics like revenge porn and online grooming. The Scottish Government’s review of PSE in Scotland was piecemeal at best, with tokenistic recommendations that will make little to no difference to how PSE and the early years equivalent is taught in schools.³⁰ It is not simply about age and stage appropriate education on sex and relationships, it is about providing a high quality education on these subjects and others that are vital to a child’s social development. That is why WE will push for the introduction of subject specific Personal and Social Education (PSE) teachers, as well as light-touch assessments to track young people’s progress. WE will also seek to introduce specialist programmes for the teaching of consent in primary schools.

24. Scottish Women’s Aid, Improving housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse, December 2020
25. Stonewall Scotland, Domestic abuse
26. Galop, LGBT+ People’s Experiences of Domestic Abuse: a report on Galop’s domestic abuse advocacy service, 2018
27. Scottish Transgender Alliance, Transgender people’s experiences of domestic

abuse, 2010
28. Scottish Women’s Aid, Improving housing outcomes for women and children experiencing abuse, December 2020
29. Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
30. Scottish Government, Review of Personal and Social Education, January 2019

Reforming the justice system for women

As has been highlighted, wholesale reform of the justice system in Scotland is needed to address the appallingly low levels of reporting and of conviction for gender based violence. Over 13,000 women in Scotland reported a sexual crime last year, which was then recorded by the police - an increase of 100% in 10 years.³¹ But thousands more women are living in silence, having never reported their experience. The justice system is stacked against women in many ways, from stigmatising or overtly traumatising responses from police when reporting a crime to hostile cross-examination and a high likelihood of acquittal in the courtroom. WE fully support the Misogyny and Criminal Justice in Scotland Working Group and its remit to consider where there are gaps in the law that prevent women from reporting and accessing justice.

However, we also need to see more immediate changes, many of which have been waiting in the wings for too long. Rape and attempted rape has the lowest conviction rate of any crime in Scotland. And while conviction and clear up rates for rape and attempted rape are slowly increasing, they remain below the recent peak of 56% in 2012-13.^{32,33,34} Scotland is unique in its use of three verdicts for criminal trials - guilty, not guilty and not proven. This third verdict - not proven - is disproportionately used in cases of rape and attempted rape, sexual assault and other sexual crimes. The most recent statistics for criminal proceedings in Scotland indicate that over half of rape and attempted rape trials ended in a not proven verdict, which compares to 22% for non-sexual violent crimes.³⁵ And the only difference between not proven and not guilty is the spelling.

Not proven is a second acquittal verdict and results in full acquittal for the accused, with no legal consequences for the alleged crime. It is not possible to retry someone after a not proven verdict, even if new evidence comes to light. So in all matters it is the same as a not guilty verdict. Yet women's testimonies and those of alleged perpetrators tell us that a not proven outcome can be more traumatising and stigmatising than a not guilty verdict. Moreover, despite there being no difference between not guilty and not proven, jury members remain uncertain about the purpose of the third verdict, with many holding false beliefs about what it means and its legal consequences. There are also concerns that the availability of this verdict perpetuates myths about how someone should react to rape. For example, despite strong evidence that a rape took place juries may be reluctant to give a guilty verdict without evidence of resistance, and instead choose a not proven outcome.

Women's rights campaigners are therefore concerned that the existence of the third verdict is contributing to perpetrators walking free. This concern is justified, as the biggest mock jury trial in Scotland revealed that juries are more likely to acquit if a not proven verdict is available to them.³⁶ That is why WE are calling for an end to the proven verdict in Scotland. There are differing opinions on whether scrapping the third verdict would result in more convictions for rape and attempted rape. However, regardless of its impact on conviction rates, the third verdict serves no justifiable purpose and is perpetuating harmful myths and stereotypes about how women should react to rape. It is also the source of much trauma and stigma for both survivors and perpetrators and is therefore counterproductive to recovery and rehabilitation.

Survivors are also being retraumatised on a prolonged and long-term basis because of the backlog in trials for cases of sexual violence. Before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic some women were being forced to wait for years for their case to go to trial.³⁷ These unacceptable delays have now been exacerbated, as the court system effectively paused all proceedings to adapt to restrictions. While we know that the court is prioritising cases of violent crime, including rape and attempted rape, the slow progress is leaving many women living through trauma with little hope of recovery in sight. Judge-only trials for rape and attempted rape are controversial, with proposals to introduce this time-limited intervention during the first lockdown strongly opposed by some lawyers and politicians. However, Lady Dorrian's Review into improving the management of sexual offence cases has recommended that serious consideration be given to a pilot of judge-only trials for rape and attempted rape.³⁸ WE believe that this pilot should take place as a matter of urgency, in order to support addressing the severe backlog in cases which are traumatising women.

Finally, WE want to see increased investment in rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators, with guidance for sentencing parties on diversion to these programmes, so perpetrators never abuse, harass, assault or rape again. While reconviction rates for sexual crimes remain low, it is concerning that there has been no discernible reduction in reconviction rates for decades.³⁹ The Caledonian System is used across Scotland to rehabilitate perpetrators of gender based violence, but it has a strong focus on domestic abuse and abuse in an intimate partner context. The scope of our rehabilitation efforts must be widened to encompass all perpetrators of gender based violence, with a strong focus on rehabilitating prolific perpetrators.

BUILD BACK INCLUSIVE

Addressing women's housing insecurity

Stable, safe and accessible housing is a basic human need. Scotland's housing market should function to support its citizens to flourish, but instead people too often find themselves in precarious and insecure accommodation. This means that every 17 minutes a household in Scotland becomes homeless. And while single men are more likely to experience homelessness than single women, around a fifth of homelessness applications are for single women and female single parents are at a higher risk than male single parents.⁴⁰ Moreover, there is no data available on the number of women and children experiencing 'hidden homelessness'.

Hidden homelessness disproportionately affects women, whose experiences are still not well understood because they do not usually fit the traditional image of homelessness: male rough sleeping. Rather women's homelessness takes many different forms including sharing with family and friends, using bed and breakfast accommodation, sleeping on people's sofas or floors and re-entering abusive relationships. Women who live with multiple forms of inequality - women with disabilities, minority ethnic women, migrant women, transgender women and women who sell sex - are more likely to experience hidden homelessness, largely due to the inadequacy of the public sector response to their needs. Rough sleeping is not uncommon for women, but when women do sleep rough they occupy public space differently to men, making themselves less visible to stay safer.

In short, we do not know the full scale of women's homelessness in Scotland. However, given the insecurity and precariousness of women's housing, it is likely a bigger problem than many realise. We know that women are the minority homeowners and majority social renters in Scotland - this in itself creates huge income inequality between men and women in the UK, where homeownership is viewed as the ideal and is a primary source of wealth accumulation. Across the UK, women are also more likely to spend more of their income on rent, rely on social security for their housing costs, live in overcrowded or poor conditions and find themselves living

within insecure tenancies.⁴¹

The cause of women's housing inequality in Scotland is down to their economic and social inequality. Women's disadvantaged position in relation to employment and self-employment - driven by the gender-pay gap, over-representation in part-time and precarious work and unpaid caring - has a direct impact on their housing. And while there have been concerted efforts over the past two decades to tackle homelessness and housing insecurity in Scotland, these efforts have for the most part excluded women's voices and women's experiences. It is therefore not surprising that homelessness - including women's homelessness - is, once again, on the increase.

The next Scottish Government must extend the membership of homelessness and housing policy and strategy groups, so that they include women with experience of housing insecurity and gender expertise. WE will also call for a review of all existing homelessness and housing strategies to understand how Equality Impact Assessments have affected Scotland's approach to housing, and make improvements where necessary. In the immediate term, WE will improve the security of women's existing housing options by making the ban on winter evictions permanent, introducing caps on annual rent increases and giving single parents priority on local authority and Registered Social Landlord housing lists.

Increasing affordable and inclusive housing

Women's housing insecurity sits within the context of a national housing crisis, which was caused by years of insufficient numbers of houses being built, creating greater demand than supply. Significant measures have been taken in Scotland in recent years to address this shortfall, but more work is needed. The cost of private rented accommodation continues to rise at unaffordable rates, particularly in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and hundreds of thousands of people are on waiting lists for local authority housing.^{42,43} This all disproportionately affects women who, as is stated above, are more likely to rent from a local authority and less likely to own a house. People with disabilities are also being left

31. Scottish Government, Recorded crime in Scotland, September 2020
32. A crime or offence is regarded as cleared up where there exists a sufficiency of evidence under Scots law, to justify consideration of criminal proceedings
33. Scottish Government, Recorded crime in Scotland, September 2020
34. Scottish Government, Criminal proceedings in Scotland 2018-2019, March 2020
35. Scottish Government, Criminal proceedings in Scotland 2018-2019, March 2020
36. Scottish Government, Scottish jury research: findings from a mock jury study, October 2019

37. BBC, Coronavirus: 'Three years after rape and still no court case', May 2020
38. Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service, Improving the management of sexual offence cases, March 2021
39. Scottish Government, Reconviction rates in Scotland: 2017 to 2018, October 2020
40. Shelter Scotland, Housing and Homelessness Statistics
41. Engender, A Woman's Place: Gender, Housing and Homelessness in Scotland, February 2020

behind in the effort to address the housing crisis. Only 1,830 purpose built homes were developed between 2015 and 2018, despite there being nearly a quarter of a million Scots with disabilities.^{44,45} We also know that people with a disability face unacceptable delays to accessing inclusive housing solutions.⁴⁶

Without a doubt coronavirus has intensified the housing crisis. People's homes are now also their place of work, increasing concerns about affordability, particularly in relation to energy costs. A quarter of the Scottish population is estimated to live in fuel poverty and 1 in 10 Scottish households live in extreme fuel poverty.⁴⁷ Given that one of the main drivers of fuel poverty is income inequality, it is unsurprising that the two main types of households affected are those predominantly used by women: private and social rented. Research also indicates that fuel poverty disproportionately affects lone parents and people with a disability, who are also economically disadvantaged.⁴⁸ Addressing the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps and improving the accessibility of affordable quality housing will all help to reduce fuel poverty. However, more immediate measures are also needed to ensure people currently living in fuel poverty get the support they need.

WE will push for the development of 55,000 homes across all tenure types over the next five years, 50% of which will be affordable and 50% of which will be social rented, increasing women's access to affordable housing solutions. WE will also maintain the level of social rented homes built by the end of 2026, to help housing stock return to a sustainable level. WE will look to end commuted payments from developers for affordable housing, as well as off-site provision of affordable housing to prevent housing segregation. This should in turn support Registered Social Landlords to purchase land for development, as the profit margins for private developers for certain sites will be compromised by the requirement to build on-site affordable homes.

To support the hundreds of thousands of Scots with disabilities, the majority of whom are women, WE will seek to update the Scottish Government's Local Housing Strategy guidance and its wheelchair accessible target for local authorities, so that they reflect the wide range of inclusive housing solutions needed across all tenure types. WE will also push for 25% of Scotland's existing social housing stock to be retrofitted to increase energy efficiency, prioritising households currently living in fuel poverty. Through Social Security Scotland, WE will introduce a Utilities Support Fund for people at risk of being cut off. Both of these measures will help to reduce fuel poverty, while increasing the energy

efficiency of homes will support Scotland to reduce its carbon emissions.

A transport system for everyone

The population of Scotland is set to increase by about 6.5% in the next 20 years. But because we are generally living as part of smaller households, the number of households is expected to increase by 12% over the same period. Our population is also ageing, which means we will see an increase in the number of employed people. All of these factors are contributing to more trips and a diversifying of travel needs. Unfortunately transport forecasts indicate an increase in car use and rail passenger miles, two forms of transport that are less likely to be used by women. Whereas urban bus and inter-urban bus travel miles, which are primarily undertaken by women, are set to decrease.^{49,50}

Scotland's Transport Strategy has labelled women's travel patterns as 'complex travel behaviour'. This framing of women's travel is the problem and is the reason why women find it more difficult to get around than men. Our transport infrastructure has been developed to maximise the number of people travelling between suburbs and central urban areas at the start and end of the traditional working day. This benefits men more than women, as men are more likely to work regular business hours on weekdays. In contrast women are more likely to work part-time and engage in precarious employment with irregular hours. Moreover, women are more likely to stop multiple times and use multiple modes of transport in one trip - often called trip-chaining - in order to balance caring responsibilities with work and education.^{51,52}

Women's travel patterns are not complex. Rather, our transport system is oversimplified to the detriment of the majority of people and our planet. Prioritising infrastructure to meet a narrow set of travel needs based on the traditional commuter results in more time and money spent on travelling for everyone else and for all other needs. As investment is pumped into infrastructure to meet male travel patterns, non-commuter travel options are reduced (or sometimes withdrawn completely) making them more expensive. This leaves women, people with a disability and older people with fewer cost effective and time efficient options, limiting access to local amenities and public services. This can have a huge knock on effect for people's health and wellbeing, increasing health inequalities. Within the context of austerity measures and the dismantling of the welfare system, it also puts increased pressure on already cash-strapped households as they are forced to take lengthy trips or access a private car. This also inevitably has consequences for our planet,

which is why Scotland's actions on reducing transport related emissions must include women. It is not enough to invest in electric powered transport if the majority of people won't use it because it is not time- or cost-effective.

It is not surprising that our transport infrastructure does not support women's travel patterns when you consider that only one out of 16 transport authorities was headed by a woman in 2017, with transport having a lower level of female representation than any other public service.⁵³ And it is not just women's travel patterns that are overlooked, but also women's needs when they are travelling. Safety has been found to be a barrier to women's travel. Women in Scotland have described public transport as a 'hotspot' for gendered abuse and sexual harassment.⁵⁴ Inadequate staffing levels and poorly connected services have been highlighted by women as specific problems that create an environment for gendered abuse and harassment. This experience of feeling unsafe on public transport is compounded for women with disabilities, lesbian and bisexual women and minority ethnic women, who can face abuse and harassment based on their disability, sexuality and race in addition to their gender. Similarly girls and older women are more vulnerable to abuse and, therefore, can feel increased levels of fear in relation to safety when travelling on public transport.

Another barrier to women's travel is its lack of inclusivity. In particular, transport accessibility continues to be a significant problem for people with a disability, despite it being necessary so that they can realise their right to independent living and participation in civic life. The barriers that prevent people with a disability from using transport are wide ranging, from physical barriers like lack of ramps and reduced stops to stigmatising responses from transport staff and members of the public. These barriers can effectively trap many people with a disability in their own homes, including residential care settings.⁵⁵ Pregnant women and women with babies and young children can face similar challenges to accessing transport, and are often forced into direct competition with people with a disability for the limited amount of inclusive space.

WE will commission an audit of women's travel patterns across Scotland and charge the National Transport Strategy Delivery Board (NTS2) with the task of acting on its recommendations. WE will also prioritise improving the representation of minoritised women within our transport authorities as a matter of urgency, to address the clear knowledge gap in this sector. WE will involve women's advocacy organisations in the development of the next Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), to ensure it takes an intersectional and gendered approach to transport investment so that women can access green and cost-efficient transport on an equal basis. Through the NTS2 Delivery Board, WE will expedite the introduction of a national smart ticketing system so it is fully operational by 2026. WE will push for this system to not only allow for cross-mode and cross-operator ticketing, but to drive down prices for trip-chaining so that women are not indirectly discriminated against because of their travel patterns.

WE will also push for the NTS2 Delivery Board to work with local authorities and transport operators to make transport more inclusive. This must include action to: improve visibility of crossing locations, retrofit steps with ramps for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and prams, widen pavements and increase pedestrian lighting; increase the space for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and buggies in new fleets of buses, trains and trams, so that parents and people with a disability don't have to compete for limited space; and only increase bus fares in line with inflation and freeze them wherever possible.

WE will also ask for local communities and disability organisations to be consulted on the introduction of Low Traffic Networks (LTNs) and develop a plan to introduce LTNs where they will benefit all residents. To help ensure that the move to greener modes of transport is inclusive, WE will: prioritise increasing parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities and parents, including electric vehicle parking spaces; increasingly replace non-reserved parking spaces with bicycle parking, including reserved bicycle parking for people with disabilities and parents; offer free cycling lessons for adults; and introduce free parking across Scotland for electric vehicles and households that have shared vehicle registration.

42. Scottish Government, Private rent statistics: 2010-2020, November 2020
43. Shelter Scotland, Housing and Homelessness Statistics
44. ISD Scotland, Insights into Social Care in Scotland, June 2019
45. SFHA, Shelter and CIH, Affordable housing need in Scotland post-2021, March 2020
46. Equality and Human Rights Commission, Housing and people with a disability: Scotland's hidden crisis, May 2018
47. Scottish Government, Scottish housing condition survey: 2018 key findings, January 2020
48. Scottish Government, The lived experience of fuel poverty in Scotland, September 2020
49. Transport Scotland, Transport Forecasts 2018, October 2018
50. Scottish Government, Transport Strategy.
51. Sustrans Scotland, Are we nearly there yet? Exploring gender and active travel, February 2018
52. Engender, Engender response to the Scottish Government consultation on Scotland's National Transport Strategy
53. Engender, Engender response to the Scottish Government consultation on Scotland's National Transport Strategy
54. Engender, Engender response to the Scottish Government consultation on Scotland's National Transport Strategy
55. Inclusion Scotland, Consultation on the Scottish Government's Draft Delivery Plan 2016-2020

MEET THE CANDIDATES



ANNA NORDAHL

Anna joined the Women's Equality Party just over a year ago, having had no previous political experience. From the beginning, she has been an active member, setting up a local branch in the Scottish Highlands & Islands, attending the 2020

conference and taking part in workshops, seminars and workgroups. Anna is an NHS front line worker and has witnessed first hand the enormous strain on our health care and social care systems over the past year. She also knows from experience how much we, as a society, depend on these two systems and the people working in care settings. Yet, despite this, she sees care workers struggling to put food on the table for their families and hears how they cannot afford to stay off work when they are unwell. Anna is a passionate advocate for equality and believes Scotland needs a parliament that truly represents the population, with more women, from all backgrounds, in politics.



EMMA WATT

Emma Watt was born in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland and grew up in Ireland, Suffolk and Banff. She is a graduate of the University of Glasgow and completed postgraduate studies in Social Work. Emma has travelled extensively,

living in China and Indonesia. Previously a Day Centre officer in Aberdeenshire for adults with learning disabilities, she now works for a third sector social work organisation overseeing services for newly arrived refugee communities. Emma identifies as a survivor of gender-based violence and has been outspoken about her negative experiences of reporting to Police Scotland. Her experience of being a single parent of two daughters and a carer have also profoundly informed her intersectional feminist views. She is determined to ensure that the voices of women who have been silenced are magnified and heard by policy makers and legislators in Scotland.



DAVID RENTON

David is a biker, barrister, philosopher, charity Chairperson, disability advocate and occasional poet. He is a Women's Equality Party Founder Member and is the first Disabled man to stand for WE in a Scottish Election.

David has roots in Glasgow and was born into the Theatre. David left school at 15 and has worked as a care worker, cook, roofer's mate, stagehand, lighting designer, despatch rider, and motorbike instructor. Returning to education in his 30s, he has degrees in Law, Artificial Intelligence, Philosophy and Scottish Literature, from Kings College London and from Edinburgh University. David has lived in Edinburgh for the whole of the 21st Century.



ESTHI THURSTON

Esthi is a parent, a part-time air traffic controller and union rep who is passionate about equality! She has been a member of the Women's Equality Party for three years and this is her first year standing as a candidate. Esthi's experience of working

in a male-dominated industry has given her cause to reflect on the importance of representation, as leaders and role models but most importantly as diverse voices in the rooms where decisions are made. She understands the importance of good mental health and how equality can contribute to that in a multitude of different ways. As a home educator, Esthi is an advocate for educational choice. An equal education does not mean the same education for all. She strongly believes that an equal society is a happy one. A society where we flourish together.



LUCY HAMMOND

Lucy is 51-years old, from Port Seton near Edinburgh and is a mother to three girls and one boy. She is a founder member of the Women's Equality Party and passionately believes that equality is better for everyone, including

men and boys. Lucy is a Social Worker, working specifically to support and rehabilitate men who have sexually or domestically abused women. She also works with women in the criminal justice system and has campaigned for change in the prison system. As someone who enjoys mechanics and engineering, she is an advocate for increasing the diversity of trade professions and STEM workplaces, believing they shouldn't be viewed as male jobs.



RUTH WILKINSON

Ruth is the Party's elected Spokesperson in Scotland and first candidate on the Glasgow list.

She is currently a student, reading for an MSc in Applied Gender Studies at Strathclyde University. Ruth has lived in the Glasgow

area since 1995 and been a member of the Glasgow Branch of WE since it was founded. She lives on the south side of the city with her husband and teenaged daughter. One of the reasons Ruth feels so passionately that we need to campaign for women's equality is that she thought, years ago when she was just discovering feminism, that we'd have sorted the patriarchy out by 2021. Unfortunately, Ruth sees her daughter coping with far too many of the same things that she has had to cope with, to say nothing of all the extra ones thrown up by the internet. That's why Ruth jumped at the chance to join the Women's Equality Party when it was first set up, and that's why she is campaigning for the Women's Equality Party in this election.



SUZANNE MARTIN

Suzanne is the Party's elected Movement Builder in Scotland, leading on branch and membership development.

Suzanne is a 29 year old public affairs and policy professional who currently works for a national mental

health charity. Since graduating from university in 2015, she has worked across a range of industries, from built environment to health and social care. As someone who has worked in male-dominated industries, Suzanne has often been the only woman and young person in the room. She understands the barriers women face when it comes to participating on an equal basis within the workplace, and how this can influence significant decisions that profoundly affect local communities. Originally from Fife, Suzanne moved to Glasgow at the age of 17 to study. Having had a privileged upbringing and continuing to lead a privileged life, she has only ever experienced discrimination and prejudice based on her gender and age. But that was enough to start her on what will be a lifelong path of women's rights advocacy based on an intersectional approach. Suzanne has worked as a volunteer for Glasgow East Women's Aid and joined the Women's Equality Party in 2017.

