



*Celebrating*  
— 25 YEARS —  
1997-2022

# **A MANIFESTO FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY & COVID RECOVERY**



## **2022 Scottish Local Elections**

**1,219 seats across 32 local authorities**

Councillors' responsibilities include executive decision making at council meetings, policy making, delivery of services and use of resources; scrutiny of decisions which can include serving on scrutiny panels or committees; regulatory functions such as those that deal with planning and licensing applications; representing their ward at meetings with residents, interest groups and the wider community.



## Poverty

Inequality perpetuates poverty. Coupled with rapidly increasing costs of living and a lack of opportunity for many citizens, poverty is now the biggest driver for many community safety issues.

These can include violence, substance misuse, modern slavery, scams and fraud, problem gambling and crippling indebtedness.

To improve community safety, we ask local leaders to appreciate poverty's root causes, to be bold and explore meaningful solutions that can help lift citizens.

We encourage local councillors to:

- Advocate for a continued commitment to Universal Basic Income
- Prioritise the eradication - and local need for - food banks in every ward, in every community
- Encourage greater local collaboration, between community groups and local services, to help reduce poverty and increase equality
- Highlight the gross injustice of poverty, and make clear that poverty is a political choice, not a personal one.
- Advocate for and adopt a basic income for care leavers (young adults over 18 leaving care) in local authorities, similar to the three-year pilot launching in Wales in 2022 (offering £1,600 per month), and include financial wellbeing training.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

Safe communities enhance citizens' wellbeing, improve people's perceptions of place and home, attract investment and opportunities, and create the neighbourhoods people want to live in and feels safe in.

Covid-19 has transformed our communities. The global pandemic often feels bigger than us but local influence, small changes can have profound impacts.



We believe Scotland's communities will be safer if there are local commitments to:

- Attend and uphold local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) meetings, highlight their achievements and encourage others to them
- Prioritise mental health & wellbeing, recognise the importance of directed care and support, and promote investment in same
- Reduce domestic violence – currently increasing year on year – and facilitate collaboration with local partners
- Highlight online safety and raise awareness of soaring digital related crime, and its risks and effects, particularly for the most vulnerable
- Recommend more investment for youth work, community learning, family support and neighbourhood projects
- Collaborate, share and co-produce. Encourage inter-agency, cross-service agreement. Invite many voices, locally to find answers to complex problems for constituents
- Continued support for – and promotion of – the Equally Safe strategy, in every local authority.



## CRIME & JUSTICE

SCSN supports fair, compassionate, trauma informed policies and practices.

We believe in evidence-led approaches and systems that focus on rehabilitation as a means of reducing crime. We advocate for effective, intelligent, human-centred responses to crime and justice, informed by age, need, circumstance and vulnerability.

We want Scotland to be at the forefront of a progressive, considerate, adaptable criminal justice system. We encourage local councillors to support:

- Further raising of the age of criminal responsibility (now 12) to 14 years old
- Fair and informed sentencing, sympathetic to the complexities of individuals and modern environments
- Reducing the prison population, and understanding the alternatives to prison
- Greater investment in – and commitment to – prevention and early intervention projects
- Further decriminalisation of drug use to help reduce drug harms
- Change in law, to move away from the criminalisation of prostitutes, instead targeting those who pay for sex
- Investing in – and increasing public confidence for – community justice



## UNINTENTIONAL HARM & INJURY

There needs to be an urgent focus and investment in home safety across Scotland, especially now so many of us are at home more than ever before.

Our partners at RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) highlight that “falls are the single biggest cause of accidental injuries in the home, and sadly the largest cause of accidental death among over-65s in the UK”.



Attention needs to be driven at a local level by partners in communities, to help educate, prevent and raise awareness through campaigns and training.

We encourage all local leaders to:

- Increase focus and resources for home safety in every local authority, and consider appointment of a Home Safety Officer if one doesn't already exist
- Ensure local attendance at SCSN's regular, national Home Safety forum, and ensure information sharing and best practice is promoted between all local authorities
- Renew local calls for a Falls and Fracture Prevention Strategy for Scotland, from central government to be implemented across all our communities

We also ask for renewed efforts to improve:

- Safe, well maintained cycling and walking routes
- Safe and affordable housing for everyone, particularly first time buyers and the young
- Affordable, reliable, frequent public transport



## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE & PARTICIPATION

We believe communities – citizens – should be at the heart of decision making whenever possible. It demands attention and effort, and a pro-active approach to create dialogues, particularly with seldom heard or distant groups.

We encourage local leaders to involve their neighbourhoods and householders, to help find solutions and join the conversations.

We ask local councillors to:

- Renew the commitment to community engagement and participation, and ensure local people are actively invited to participate; that their views and ideas are valued; that they are at the heart of local decision making.
- Realise the promise to make participatory budgeting mainstream and commonplace, and an essential part of recovery after the pandemic
- Better understand hate crime; what it is; what causes it; how we identify and confront it; and appreciate the responsibility community and individuals have to and for each other
- Encourage data sharing between local services, and help support collaborative, co-created approaches, to find local solutions for local issues
- Ensure policies and approaches are inclusive, particularly focussed on minority groups and those with protected characteristics



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Covid-19 continues to influence how we live our lives. It has transformed culture, working, movement and social interactions.

In the coming years, we ask you to share - and make real - aspirations for:

- More kindness and compassion, empathy and understanding of the 'other', whoever that might be
- More positive, pro-active action
- Zero tolerance for hate
- Increased focus on human rights and incorporation of the UNCRC across all policy and practice in Scotland
- Flexible working for everyone who wants it, and a focus on putting people before process
- Continued exploration of Gross Domestic Wellbeing as a measure of social progress, in favour of Gross Domestic Product as the primary measure (of economic growth)
- Improved public understanding of trauma, ACES and how that impacts on the lives of citizens



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