



Programme for Government 2022-2023

On 6th September, the Scottish Government (SG) announced its [Programme for Government](#) (PfG) for 2022-23 entitled, 'A stronger and more resilient Scotland'. The prospectus outlines spending priorities, commitments and legislative plans for the year ahead and contains a welcome range of measures being taken to address the Cost of Living (CoL) crisis.

Indeed, the PfG opens on a sobering and sombre note: "This Programme for Government is published against a backdrop of the most severe economic upheaval in a generation, already impacting people, businesses, public services and the third sector across Scotland.

It is hard to overstate the gravity of the situation we face. This cost crisis puts livelihoods – and lives – at risk."

Through the lens of community safety, SCSN has reviewed and highlighted areas in the PfG that we think will be helpful to our members and partners. Owing to the spectrum and complexity of issues, our analysis is only provisional - with some comment - and we hope it points partners to areas of interest.

Cost of Living (CoL) Crisis

By the end of March, The SG plan to have distributed £3b of funding to help to CoL crisis by measures such as:

- Supporting pay offers, for example with an investment of more than £250 million on a recurring basis into local government pay.
- Putting extra funding towards family payments, school meals, bus travel, increasing the Scottish Child Payment and Child Winter Heating assistance.
- Up-rating social security payments, funding to mitigate the 'bedroom tax' and council tax reductions.
- Investing a total of £161 million across Warmer Homes Scotland, doubling the fuel insecurity fund, introducing the Winter Heating Payment and using the Emergency Budget Review to provide local authorities with additional Discretionary Housing Payment funding.
- Introducing emergency legislation to protect tenants by freezing rents and imposing a moratorium on evictions until at least 31 March 2023.

While there is always more that can be done, it is good to see the CoL crisis rightly prioritised. We are pleased to see such emphasis on fuel poverty, especially given the part that cold homes will play in falls, home safety and fire safety incidents.

Health and Social Care

The SG pledge to:

- Bring significant reform to health and social care, with the creation in law of a new National Care Service for Scotland
- Legislate to improve safety and champion the voice of patients through a Bill to create a Patient Safety Commissioner.
- Reduce drug related deaths by, for example, expansion of access to residential rehabilitation, continuing to lobby the UK Government on drug consumption rooms, publishing an Anti-Stigma Plan and expanding the Naxalone programme.
- Publish a new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy in the year ahead and a new long-term suicide prevention strategy as well as increase the mental health workforce and invest a further £30 million in mental health services.

Continued investment to tackle drugs deaths is very welcome, however it is disappointing to us to see next to no mention of increased focus on measures to tackle alcohol addiction and heavy use in Scotland. With the impact of the pandemic ongoing and the looming CoL crisis, we would also like to have seen even more emphasis on combatting mental ill health, loneliness and isolation.

Justice

The government are keen to continue to deliver on the Vision for Justice in Scotland by measures such as:

- Introducing the Criminal Justice Reform Bill which will abolish the 'Not Proven' verdict and grant automatic anonymity to complainers in sexual assault cases.
- Developing proposals to introduce new criminal offences relating to misogyny.
- Honouring the Children's Care and Justice Bill - ensuring children who come into contact with care and justice services are treated with trauma-informed and age-appropriate support and will put an end to placing under 18s in Young Offenders' Institutions.

We are especially pleased to see a continued focus on the rights of victims, the harm of misogyny and the importance of trauma-informed and age appropriate practice when it comes to children and young people in the care and justice systems. We would have liked to see further commitments to clear the court backlogs and support community justice.

Transport

The SG pledge to:

- Deliver record investment in active travel, including multiyear funding, with a focus on new infrastructure and storage, access to bikes through schemes and free bikes for school-age children who are unable to afford one.
- Further promote free bus travel for those under 22 to improve uptake following the introduction of the scheme in January 2022.
- Roll out the national strategy for expanding 20 mph zones, with more roads and areas reducing their speed limits to 20 mph.
- Work with women's groups to identify and publish recommendations on women and girls' personal safety on public transport to support future access and usage of public transport.

SCSN welcome further steps taken to make active travel and our roads safer and more accessible. We support the government's efforts to address women and girls' personal safety on public transport and hope this encourages further work to assess community safety through the 'lens' of women and girls as well as other vulnerable groups.

Climate Change and the Environment

This year's Programme for Government promises to:

- Provide and update the Climate Change Plan, keeping Scotland on track to meet net zero by 2045.
- Consulting on legislation to transform how we heat our homes.
- Introduce the Circular Economy Bill.
- Publish a National Litter and Flytipping strategy that includes strengthened enforcement measures and a clamp down on unlicensed operators.
- Consult on a new flooding strategy for Scotland, including how the country can build community flood resilience and engage a broader range of delivery partners to deliver more diverse flood management actions faster.
- Work with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and others to ensure the right strategic approach to water scarcity is in place.

SCSN have worked hard over the last year to understand the affects climate change will have on community safety. With this in mind, we are pleased to see commitments upheld and increased emphasis on flooding and water scarcity planning. Increased rainfall and heat however come with other significant consequences, especially to infrastructure and home safety, which we would like to see addressed as well. After the effects of the pandemic on littering and fly-tipping, SCSN welcome plans for strengthened measures to tackle this problem.

Communities

To support communities, the SG will:

- Deliver affordable high quality homes, the majority for social rent, with the ambitious target of 110,000 new homes by 2032.
- Provide a New Deal for Tenants with an ambitious series of reforms of the renting sector, including legislation to introduce robust rent controls for the long term.
- Publish a new Hate Crime Strategy for Scotland.
- Develop a Bill to end conversion practices, covering both sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Deliver their commitment to invest £60 million to renew play-parks in Scotland.
- Invest up to £75 million in place based initiatives, which supports our most fragile communities and accelerate our ambitions for place and to help people live well locally.
- Publish a response to the report of our working group on Institutionalising Participatory and Deliberative Democracy, setting out how we can involve people and communities, government, and children and young people in democratic decision making.

Publishing the long awaited new hate crime strategy as well the introduction of a bill to end conversion practices are important developments in the fight against inequality in Scotland that SCSN will be very pleased to see. Moving on from the Community Empowerment Act (2015), we keenly await the response to the report, Institutionalising Participatory and Deliberative Democracy, and the government's plans to increase meaningful community participation. In support of third sector service providers, who are essential in supporting communities, we are disappointed not to see measures to mitigate the crippling running costs crisis affecting so many vital services.