

Scotland can be a just nation

Faodaidh Alba a bhith laidir ann an ceartas



#GREENHOLYROOD VOTE GREEN 2016



SCOTLAND CAN BE A JUST NATION

Equality measures that relate to health, care, social security, education and other policy areas are integrated throughout our manifesto. This is in line with our ambition to integrate equality in all of our work. This mini manifesto sets out our overarching strategy for equality and diversity.



Scotland can be proud of progress that has been made to enhance equality, protect diversity and strengthen access to justice. However, we do not yet live in a country where everyone has equal access to security and opportunities. The Scottish Green Party stands for zero tolerance against all forms of discrimination. Tackling inequality in society, in terms of income and wealth, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion, benefits all of us.

In order to reduce crime we must increase social justice in Scotland - inequality, poverty, homelessness and addiction are amongst the causes of offending. Green MSPs will focus on addressing these root causes of crime, tackling barriers to services, employment and participation in society, and defending access to justice for all as a fundamental human right.

KEY POLICIES



ACTION FOR EQUALITY

Bold, proactive measures are needed to achieve real equality in Scotland. Our Green MSPs will champion the Racial Equality Framework for Scotland, full equality before the law for LGBTI+ communities, a Strategy for Inclusion co-produced with disabled people, and a Gender Equality Bill.

EQUALITY BUDGETING

Public spending must reflect Scotland's policy commitments to increase equality. We will push to improve equality impact assessment and budget analysis, which take stock of how decision-making impacts differently on groups protected under equality law. Equality concerns must be embedded in all resource allocation and policy development.

LOCAL POLICE

A significant devolution of power and resources to local police forces is needed to more effectively tackle crime in Scotland. We will work towards local policing that is accountable to independent, democratically controlled police authorities and investment in community policing to focus efforts on crime prevention.



"Since 1999 the Scottish Greens have shown leadership on tackling crimes motivated by prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. We will continue to do this. We must increase support for victim support, including sustainable and long term funding for violence against women support and advice services.

"And when it comes to crime, I'm proud that Greens don't care about looking tough; instead in the coming election we'll be arguing for what is proven to genuinely reduce crime – accountable local policing, serious crime prevention, and constructive sentencing and rehabilitation."

JOHN FINNIE

SGP justice spokesperson, 2011-2016 MSP and 2016 top list candidate for Highlands and Islands



PART 1: ACTION ON EQUALITY

SCOTLAND CAN TAKE ACTION FOR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Working with communities

The vast majority of Scotland's population has poor access to resources, opportunities and security compared with those who are privileged and powerful. We will prioritise the goal of equality and work with those whose chances in life are reduced because of class, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, to develop our plans for an equal Scotland.

Racial equality

Racial discrimination remains a crucial issue in Scotland, for UK-born individuals, as well as for refugees and first generation migrants. People from Scotland's minority ethnic communities are significantly more likely to live in poverty, and employment and political representation rates are unacceptably low compared with white ethnic groups. Our MSPs will support full implementation the Racial Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030 in order to tackle pervasive racism across our society.

LGBTI+ equality

There must be equality before the law, regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. We will back the campaign to reform gender recognition law in line with international best practice. We will call for a government-led review of legislation and services to identify inequalities for LGBTI+ couples and for legislation to make Civil Partnerships open to all couples, on an equal basis with marriage.

Strategy for Inclusion

Disabled people still experience exclusion across social, economic and political life in Scotland, to the detriment of our society as a whole. We must work to break down the barriers that prevent disabled people from realising their rights. Scottish Greens will take a lead from disabled people's organisations to promote a co-produced Strategy for Inclusion which works towards equal access to resources, fulfilling employment, public services, and participation in politics and public life.



SCOTLAND CAN PUT EQUALITY AT THE HEART OF PUBLIC LIFE

Better equality outcomes

Scotland has the power to lead by example across the public sector. We will advocate for stronger Scottish regulations of the Public Sector Equality Duty and investment in the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in Scotland to improve equality outcomes across Scotland's public bodies. Green MSPs will continue to push for the devolution of equalities law.

Diverse representation

Fair and diverse representation in public life is a matter of democracy and leads to better outcomes for everyone. We will encourage measures to increase the participation of all groups that are underrepresented in politics and public life, such as the introduction of 50% gender quotas for public boards. We back the One in Five and Women 50:50 campaigns.

LGBTI+ duty

We support comprehensive action to tackle discrimination and inequality in employment and public services. We will support a legal duty on local authorities and public institutions to deliver effective services directly to the LGBTI+ community.

Gender inequality is deeply entrenched in Scotland's economy, politics and culture. Despite some progress, the rate of change is incredibly slow. As a result, diverse groups of women, including disabled women, refugee women, unpaid carers, older women and lone parents experience discrimination, poverty and insecurity. Green MSPs will support a **Gender Equality Bill** to drive progress against women's inequality.



FINANCIAL INEQUALITY - THE NUMBERS



Almost 20% of Scottish people live with the daily reality of poverty. Women are hardest hit.

£6.1m

is the combined wealth of the FOUR richest Scottish families.

This is £1m more than the POOREST 20% of Scotland, whose combined wealth is measured at £5.1m.



In 2011-12, healthy life expectancy for men and women in the most deprived fifth of Scotland's population was 20 years shorter than in the least deprived.



64 percent

of low-paid workers are women. As full time workers, women earn 11.5% less than men, while as part time workers, they earn 32.4% less than their male counterparts.

Between 1982 and 2012, the Scottish economy doubled in size. In the same time period, the number of households who fell below society's minimum standard of living increased from 14% to 33%.



FOOD POVERTY

- Scotland's largest food bank provider, Trussell Trust, provided three day emergency food packages to 117,689 people in 2014-2015 - an 800% increase on the figure from just two years before.
- Of these, more than 30,000 packages were for children.
- The spike in the number of Scottish people relying on food banks is not as the result of a food shortage; large numbers of people simply cannot afford to buy the food which is available.

Photo: Falkirk food bank (top), Holyrood Magazine (below).



Tackling inequality in society, in terms of income and wealth, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion, benefits all of us. More equal societies are more successful, both economically and socially.



Data from Oxfam's Even It Up report, October 2015.

PART 2: JUSTICE AND POLICING

Photo: Street League UK

SCOTLAND CAN CREATE SAFER COMMUNITIES

To make communities safer, we believe we have to tackle the root causes of crime. We don't simply want to look tough on crime, but we want to address the causes by including the bigger picture including mental health, poverty, drug misuse etc. within our strategy for dealing with crime. **That is why we support the restorative justice approaches and community based sentences including, where appropriate, reparation.**

Tackling violence

Too many women and men in Scotland are survivors of violence. We will push for increased support for the vital work undertaken by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and for a sustainable, long-term funding plan to resource violence against women services, including women's aid groups and rape crisis centres. We will work to ensure provision of appropriate support services for LGBTI+ people who have been subject to domestic or sexual abuse.

Hate crime

Our Green MSPs will stand firm against hate crime and show leadership on tackling crimes motivated by prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. We will work to improve research, data collection and reporting processes.

Rights-based approach

We will call for more rights-based training for police and staff within the justice system on equality issues including hate crime, violence against women, trauma, and learning disabilities.

Sex work

We will advocate for the rights of sex workers to enjoy full legal protection from exploitation, trafficking and violence and access to better support and healthcare.

SCOTLAND CAN REFORM POLICE SCOTLAND

Whilst we did not advocate for a single police service for Scotland, believing that one size does not fit all when it comes to policing, the existing structure can effectively address strategic issues such as terrorism, human trafficking and cross-border crime. Nonetheless, a significant devolution of power and resources to local division level is required. We will champion local policing and investment in community policing.

Accountability

It is vital that robust checks and balances regulate the police force. Green MSPs will advocate for proportionate use of force; an evidenced need for any firearms deployment; a review of authorisation procedures and privacy protection mechanisms regarding surveillance powers; and a review of the Police Complaints Procedure, with a view to introducing greater independence from the Police.

Diversity

As with all of our democratic institutions, diversity in the police force is crucial. We will encourage greater diversity in personnel across all levels of the police force.



SCOTLAND CAN ENSURE ACCESS TO JUSTICE

We believe that everyone in Scotland has a fundamental human right to access justice, it should not just be a privilege for those with adequate funds. We will ensure that the availability of legal aid isn't a barrier to accessing justice.

The right to justice

It is vital that everyone in Scotland is able to access justice as a fundamental human right. Our Green MSPs will work to ensure that geography and means are not barriers to accessing justice, and to enhance Legal Aid. We will support greater use of Alternative Dispute Resolutions mechanisms and Scotland's full compliance with the Aarhus Convention on rights and access to justice on environmental law.

Violence against women

Access to justice for survivors of gender based violence is undermined by a number of key issues. We will work to establish a right to independent legal representation for women who have experienced domestic abuse and rape and sexual assault; remove means testing for Protective Orders; abolish the not proven verdict in Scottish law; and implement medical examination guidelines.

Children

Green MSPs will support measures to strengthen protection for children from assault, including removal of the defence of 'reasonable chastisement'.

SCOTLAND CAN REDUCE REOFFENDING

The current approach to sentencing does not work. Our prisons are overcrowded, and reoffending is a continuing problem, with very little progress being made towards the Scottish Government's national indicator to reduce reconviction rates. Despite being a policy priority for a number of years, rates have fallen by less than one per cent in three years.

We want a new approach to sentencing that is based on evidence, not rhetoric.

Partnership working

Efforts to reduce the likelihood of reoffending will require that the complex needs of offenders and victims are addressed by a wide partnership of agencies and services working together. We will encourage greater use of diversion from prosecution schemes and programmes of meaningful activity for those given a custodial sentence.

Community sentencing

We will push for short prison sentences of less than six months to be abolished; investment in community sentencing and effective restorative justice; and reform that ensures custodial sentences are only used for those who pose a threat to the public.

SCOTLAND CAN SUPPORT PEOPLE ADDICTED TO DRUGS

Decriminalisation

We believe that the criminalisation of drug use creates more harm than managed and regulated supplies. It ties up much police time and decades of effort have failed to eradicate drug use from society. Green MSPs will support the decriminalisation of the cultivation and possession of cannabis for personal use, and decriminalisation of possession of drugs that grow wild in the UK.

Licensing, enforcement and treatment

We will support licensing for the supply of cannabis and propose that other currently illicit drugs required as part of a programme of treatment for addiction are supplied through pharmacist-run treatment centres. Enforcement of existing laws should prioritise targeting major illicit suppliers, and penalties should reflect accurate assessment of harm. And Green MSPs will advocate for increased investment in drug and alcohol treatment programmes.



Promoted by Laura Cameron Lewis on behalf of the Scottish Green Party, both at 72 Newhaven Road, Edinburgh, EH6 5QG.

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