

SNP Manifesto 2021

What we're doing for women

The SNP has a proud record of fighting for gender equality while in government. From action on equal pay, support for women returning to the work place, the first gender-balanced Cabinet in the UK and taking action to end period poverty we've worked hard to tear down barriers.

Over the next parliament we will go further.
Re-elect the SNP to:

Improve healthcare for women

We will develop and implement a Women's Health Plan aiming to improve services and reduce health inequalities for women and girls. It will:

- establish a dignified, compassionate miscarriage service tailored to the needs of women, taking forward the findings of the lancet report and supporting the development of individualised care plans after a woman's first miscarriage
- emulate New Zealand where families who experience miscarriage or stillbirth are entitled to 3 days of paid leave by delivering this within the public sector and call on the UK Government to make the necessary changes to employment law to make it available for everyone,
- review midwifery and health visiting pathways for new families and babies, look at improving access to practical breastfeeding support, physical therapy advice and increasing postpartum and mental wellbeing support,
- ensure maternity departments have dedicated facilities for women who are experiencing unexpected pregnancy complications,

- reduce waiting times for diagnosing endometriosis from over 8 years to less than 12 months by the end of the parliament and look to improve the experience and diagnosis of women who visit their GPs with other menstrual problems,
- ensure women have improved access to specialist services for advice and support on the diagnosis and management of menopause. We will launch a public health campaign to remove stigma and raise awareness of the symptoms of the menopause.

Ensure a fairer economy

We will create a dedicated Women's Business Centre to provide financial support, advice and training to women looking to start or grow their business, backed by £50 million. As part of this, we will invest £3 million per year to pay the equivalent of a full time salary for 100 female applicants to develop their pioneering business idea.

To tackle the motherhood penalty, we will halt the interest on student loans during maternity leave and continue funding for our Women Returners Programme to help women back into work.

We will build on our work to create a wellbeing economy, by developing measures of economic performance that take proper account of the contribution and cost of

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formal and informal care. This will help to ensure that we do not take care, which though not exclusively, is so often done by women, for granted.

We will build flexible and family friendly working into our Fair Work First programme, learning lessons from working practices during the pandemic to make it easier for women, particularly single parents, to return to work and also encourage a more equal share of childcare responsibilities.

While not all women have children we know that the availability of free high quality childcare is hugely important for many women in the workplace. We will complete the expansion of free, high quality childcare to 1,140 hours - the same time a child spends in primary school - by August 2021.

In the next Parliament we will go further, by building a system of 'wraparound' childcare, providing care before and after school, all year round. Those on the lowest incomes will pay nothing, and others will make fair and affordable contributions.

Work towards a safer Scotland

In government, the SNP introduced Equally Safe, our strategy to combat all forms of violence against women and girls.

We will establish a new multi-year £100 million funding stream over the next three years to back that plan, support frontline services and focus on prevention of violence against women and girls.

To help women and girls be safe on the streets we will work with stakeholders on how to better educate men about the impact of their behaviour. We will explore ways to improve the design of communities, such as Space Safety Audits, to make women not just feel safer, but be safer.

We will listen carefully to the Working Group on Misogyny and Criminal Justice - including creating a standalone offence if it is recommended and we will enshrine the right to lifelong anonymity for complainers of sexual crimes in Scots law.

Promote women in sport

We will task SportScotland to work with organisations and individuals across Scotland to devise a new national activity plan. A priority will be to support the participation of more women and girls.

We will review our investment in sport, including sponsorship, to ensure it benefits men and women equally and we will work with public broadcasters in Scotland to support them to significantly increase the amount of women's sport shown on Scottish screens, so that we can inspire girls and boys to take part in sports.

Improve representation in public artwork

We will create a new £2 million fund for public artwork which broadens the range of representation in public spaces of Scotland's history and culture, in particular the contribution of women and minority ethnic communities.

Strengthen rights at home and around the world

We will introduce an overarching Scottish Diversity and Inclusion Strategy covering the public sector, our educational institutions, justice system, and workplaces. This strategy will focus on the removal of institutional, cultural and financial barriers which lead to inequalities in relation to gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and social mobility.

We will incorporate into Scots Law the UN Convention of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

We will become the first country in the UK, joining a small number of countries across the world, to adopt a feminist foreign policy.

We will establish a £500,000 International Development Women and Girls Empowerment Fund targeted at helping women and girls, particularly in terms of accessing education, in our partner countries of Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda.

We will continue to support UN Security Council Resolution 1325, training women to play crucial roles in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, and expand our work in the year of COP26 to include a fellowship focused on climate change.