

BECAUSE EQUALITY IS BETTER FOR EVERYONE

Equality in Scotland means a society where everyone has the same opportunity to live, thrive, and develop to their full capacity, regardless of their class, gender, sex, sexuality, colour or ethnicity, religion or belief, disability, age, background or any other irrelevant consideration.

Equality means a Scotland where everyone is a true equal to everyone else, entitled to the same rights, respect and protection.

Equality does not mean a Scotland where everyone is the same, but a Scotland where our differences are valued, because difference is strength, and diversity is a joy, not a problem.

Cost of Living and Avoidable Poverty

Scotland is a rich country overall, with massive energy resources and potential, especially in renewable energy.

At the same time so many people struggle to pay basic bills.

People have to choose whether to buy food, put clothes on their children's backs, or pay gas and electricity bills.

The very poorest cannot afford to do any of those things without help from food banks and charities.

One child in every four in Scotland lives in poverty. Most of those children have a parent in work.

If you are a child with a disabled parent, or you are a disabled child, you are even more likely to be living in poverty.

If you are a child with a parent who is in any sort of minority you are more likely to live in poverty.

If you are a child with a parent who is in more than one minority group, that inequality gets even worse.

Think of four children you know, then make your choice: will you pick one of them to live in poverty, or will you vote for a party that will fight to end all child poverty?

An unequal Scotland is not a Scotland that any of us want to live in.

Inequality is bad for everyone; rich or poor. Who wants to live in a society where children go to bed cold and afraid each night, and wake up each morning to another day of hunger?

The Equality Party knows that Scotland does not have to be like this.

The Equality Party will fight for a truly equal Scotland, where everyone has the right to an affordable dignified life in a safe and warm home.

Because Equality is Better for Everyone.

Our Objectives

The Equality Party's goal is to overturn core inequalities by changing how our economy system and society operate.

We prioritise these objectives:

Equal representation across politics, industry, public and working life

Equal pay and opportunity, and equality in education and childcare

A sustainable economic model that priorities the wellbeing of people and planet

Public services such as housing, healthcare, social care and justice, that work for all, without discrimination

Media, arts and education that delivers fair and inclusive human stories

An end to gender-based and hate-motivated violence and abuse.

The Equality Party Fights For:

A Fair and Equal Economy. The Wellbeing Economy .

Who is a 'good' economy good for? It depends on what 'good' is a measure of.

'Growth' is not a measure of how good an economy is for most people. In an unequal society it is a measure of how good the economy is for the rich people at the top.

'Higher Productivity' is not a way of working people taking home more money, it is a measurement of how much more the people they work for can take in profit.

Numerous Scottish Governments have put forward economic plans for higher growth and higher productivity. That means higher potential for wealth for richer people and higher profit for employers. It often does not mean anything useful for people on low or medium incomes.

A Wellbeing Economy is one where you measure the success of an economy by how much better it makes things for people.

The Equality Party will Promote a Wellbeing Economy.

An Economy to Promote Equality and Save the Planet

Current economic planning mostly looks at how much money policies generate, not at how good they are for people and our Environment. It is short term, not long term.

We will ensure that all economic planning and decisions focus on moving towards a Scotland where everyone has enough good food to eat, somewhere safe, warm and dry to live, affordable energy and water bills and the opportunity to live their lives to the full.

Planning for a Circular Economy measures environmental impact, and promotes recycle, reuse and reduction of use of our limited resources.

Planning for a Circular Wellbeing Economy means always prioritising how good proposals and decisions are for the environment and for people, not just how good they are for profit. It is long term planning not short term profiteering.

The Equality Party stands up for a Wellbeing economy.

The Equality Party stands for a Circular economy.

The Equality Party stands for a Doughnut economy.

The Equality Party stands for an Economy for People and Planet, an economy that is good for everyone, not an economy just for profits for the rich.

Taxation

The Equality Party will never tolerate taxes that ordinary people cannot afford.

The Equality Party will establish a tax system that is really fair for all, that is based on the ability to pay, not the ability to find tax loopholes.

The Equality Party will not shy away from creating new wealth taxes.

The Equality Party believes that being able to afford to pay more tax than most is a privilege, not a burden, for the rich. If you are REALLY rich you should be paying MUCH more tax.

Council Tax

Is a regressive tax – it is not based on ability to pay, and the very rich pay far less relative to the value of their houses.

The Equality Party would replace Council Tax with a local tax based on ability to pay.

Housing

Everyone in Scotland should be able to live in safe affordable warm dry housing that meets their needs.

The only way to deal with Scotland's housing shortage and high rents is to create much more suitable, secure, long-term housing.

The Equality Party will:

Legislate to empower Councils to use planning controls to promote the building and creating of more long term housing for ordinary Scots.

Ensure that building long term housing is at least as attractive for developers as building short term lets, aparthotels and purpose built student lets.

Increase the proportion of new build or refurbished/remodelled housing that is genuinely accessible. This will include involvement of disabled people in all stages of planning and development of that housing.

Transport

Public transport in the very centres of Scotland's major cities is generally good, but once you get outside a city centre it is patchy and unconnected.

All public transport needs improvements in accessibility for disabled people and other disadvantaged groups.

We will:

Ensure that public transport outside cities is enhanced and joined up, to encourage all those who can do so to choose public transport over private vehicles.

Involve disabled people and other disadvantaged groups in a programme of revision and overhauling of accessibility in all forms of public transport.

Ensure that all less polluting means of transport are made more attractive to use for all.

Considerable work has been done to make cycling more attractive but this has sometimes come at the expense of the safety and security of pedestrians, wheelchair users and other vulnerable groups. Vulnerable groups must always come first and planning and other decisions must reflect that.

Cycling is not an option for many people, due to disability and other issues. We will make other less polluting and less congesting forms of transport more visible and attractive. These will include motorcycles and other powered two wheel vehicles. Measures will include increasing genuinely secure motorcycle parking to combat the current epidemic of motorcycle theft in Scotland, particularly in our large cities.

Take measures to make public transport safer for women and other vulnerable groups, involving members of all those groups in those decisions.

Health and Social Care

The Health and Social Care systems in Scotland need to be joined up so that they work smoothly and fully as one supportive system for all the people of Scotland.

Investment in a Care Economy with well paid jobs and proper career pathways benefits the wider economy and the environment. Care jobs are Green Jobs.

To take one example: Scotland currently keeps people in hospitals well after there is a clinical need, because the social care places or services they need are not being made available to them when they need them. Keeping people in hospital when they do not need to be there is dehumanising and limiting for people, and is MUCH more expensive than providing those social care services.

The Equality Party will:

Recruit more social care workers by increasing pay and job security, improving working conditions and providing for a proper career progression structure.

Structure the joining up of health and social care so that it prioritises the needs of the individual in a way that enables everyone to live their lives as fully as possible while being cared for and supported as they need. This would involve full input from service users in the decision making processes.

Parents and Children

Children with neurodevelopmental issues and other additional needs are denied assessments and diagnosis due to waiting lists, resulting in a delay in diagnosis for years, sometimes in adulthood and middle age and this affects their educational and life prospects.

Free childcare would enable more parents to work. The cost of childcare is so high that unless you have friends or relatives to look after your children, you have no hope of being able to work unless you are affluent enough to be able to afford it. Even contributions to childcare seem like nothing depending on the type of work you are able to do. Everyone should be able to work without being a parent being a barrier.

The Equality Party will:

Ensure children with additional needs and/or potential neurodiverse issues has their own individual plan within the school they attend agreed upon by learning professionals, parents and any other professionals involved that focus on the child's individual needs and include any referrals that need to be made but also targets to overcome or address issues to ensure progress for the child while they wait for an assessment so that they are not left to struggle and drown.

Invest in recruiting more teachers, bring in accessible training programmes for more people to train as teachers, particularly ASN teachers and support staff as well as investing in resources paramount to assisting teachers and pupils alike in providing support for children with additional needs/neurodiverse needs.

We will offer free childcare for all children across the board, allowing parents to return to work without the fear of simply working to pay for childcare. We will also look to increase the number of hybrid and work from home job opportunities for the disabled and for parents still wanting to work if their child is not at home or opt not to use childcare. We will also work towards new schemes and training opportunities for parents to obtain new qualifications and to get back into work. Research shows if childcare was not an issue and all the parents who wanted to work could without this barrier, that this would bring in an additional £2 billion per year.

Human Rights

When you label non-white people as different, as less than human, you enable slavery and deportation without justice.

When you label Jewish people as different, as less than human, you enable pogroms and the Holocaust.

When you label gay people as different, as less than human, you enable section 28, the muzzling of teachers and 'queer bashing'.

When you label disabled people as different, as less than human, you enable benefit cuts that lock people in their own homes, you enable streets and buildings that 'lock out' disabled people, you enable public transport that does not work for all, you enable changes to Motability that prevent disabled people from living their lives on a level playing field

When you label women as different, as less than human, you enable blind hatred of women, you enable banter culture, the mansphere, the normalisation of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and rape without consequences.

When you label trans people as different, as less than human, you enable bathroom bans, you enable girls banned from the Guides, mature women ejected from the women's institute. You enable the erasure of people's identities.

Every time you treat a person as less than human, you wear away a bit of your own humanity, and the humanity of everyone.

That is why the Equality Party will always speak out for the rights of everyone in Scotland's Society

Because the human rights of every single person are the human rights of us all.

Nothing About Us Without Us

No planning or consultation on the rights of a group of people is valid unless the voices of people in that group are the strongest voices in the consultation process AND in the decision making body.

We will ensure that ALL planning and decision making in government includes and prioritises those voices

An End to Gender-Based and Hate-Motivated Violence and Abuse

We have an epidemic of violence against women and girls, the LGBTQIA+ community and other groups in Scotland, and that violence is a cause and consequence of inequalities.

Intersectional characteristics increase the likelihood of violence, for example disabled women or women of colour are even more likely to be victims of violence than white able-bodied women.

Trans women and trans men are more likely than cis women and cis men to be victims of abuse and violence, both in relationships and in society as a whole.

This violence and abuse endangers lives and limits opportunities for those directly affected, but is also corrosive and damaging to the whole of society, and is a financial drain on Scotland's economy because of the cost of dealing with the problems and the opportunities lost when we limit the chances to contribute to so many people.

We will:

Publish statistics and set trackable short and long-term targets for reducing and eliminating domestic abuse, sexual violence and hate crime

Immediately include sex as one of the aggravating factors in hate crime by amending the Hate Crime and Public Order Act (Scotland).

Look at the evidence in favour of including other protected characteristics.

Speed up justice and improve outcomes for hate crime, sexual violence and domestic abuse by scrutinising and modernising the briefs of Police Scotland and the COPFS.

Implement programmes to develop a culture of calling-out and stopping non-criminal harassment and abuse, in order to prevent escalation

Improve fully-inclusive RSHP education in schools to help young people develop healthy relationships and respect for others

Strengthen Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies in all public bodies for EDI so that they are truly inclusive of all groups and support all of Scotland's people, prioritising respect and consideration for all.

Media, arts and education that deliver fair and inclusive human stories

'If you can see it, you can be it'.

Scotland punches above its weight in the Arts – we can be still better if we open them to all.

If we want an inclusive and equal society, women and other minoritised groups must be proportionately and fairly represented in the media - including in news reporting, in fictional media (books, films) and in interactive media (games, social media), as well as on physical things like banknotes, the names of storms, of monuments, of buildings, of streets, and everywhere else where things are named after people.

In education it is important that children learn about the contributions of women, people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ people, those with disabilities and those with other characteristics.

We must open up this 'hidden history' to children (and to adults), so we can all have a more realistic view of the world and have the tools we need to challenge patriarchal values.

We must also show that men can be caregivers, homemakers, and fully participating parents who know that expressing emotion and empathy are part of being a 'real man' in an Equal society.

Inclusion in all the media, stories, heritage and artworks must mean that these things are all accessible to everyone, regardless of disability or ability to pay.

Scottish Independence

The United Kingdom must be a voluntary union, or it is nothing but a political convenience for Westminster.

The Equality Party knows that the people of Scotland are the only ones who can and should decide whether and when Scotland should be independent of the rest of the UK.

The choice of time and place of any further independence referendum should be decided by the people of Scotland as represented at Holyrood. That decision must not be manipulated, denied or limited by a Westminster Government.

Vote for the Equality Party. Because Equality is better for Everyone!

The Equality Party will work to create a fully inclusive, equitable society with diverse voices in decision-making at all levels.

The Equality Party has a more diverse list of candidates than any other party standing for Holyrood: 1 in 3 of our candidates are disabled, more than half of our candidates are not cis men.

The Equality Party unites people from diverse backgrounds to fight for equal rights and opportunities, so that everyone can contribute and thrive.

Because equality is better for everyone.