

## **FOREWORD**

When we launched Fairer Scotland in June 2015, our intention was to speak to as many people as possible... through events, online and in person... to hear first-hand the issues that matter to you and how we can become a Fairer Scotland by 2030.

Since then, **over 7,000** of you have taken part in Fairer Scotland public events and locally organised discussions. Even more of you have engaged with us online, with the number of visitors to our social media platforms edging towards **17,500**.

At the very outset of this journey, we committed to having an open and transparent discussion and to ensure that everyone's voice was listened to and heard.

We have been working hard over the past few months to ensure that this has happened, reaching out to a wide cross-section of society, and covering many areas of the country, from Stornoway to Dumfries.

I'd like to thank everyone who has taken part in Fairer Scotland, either online or through the many discussions that have happened in communities across the country.

Your insights and contributions have been both uplifting and humbling, thought provoking and stimulating. Most of all, they've been invaluable in helping us understand the issues that matter in communities across the country and in suggesting how to make Scotland fairer.

You've told us that this has been a positive process in enabling you to present your views and we've tried to ensure that everyone who wants to have a say has been able to do so. We recognise that this is just the first step on part of a longer journey and that we need to continue to work with you as we go forward.

This brief report presents a snapshot of what we have heard so far. I hope you find this of as much interest as I have and continue to work with us to make Scotland a fairer place to live.



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Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities & Pensioners' Rights

#### **OUR APPROACH**

Our aim was to engage and speak to as many of you as we could through this process, with a focus on those whose voices aren't heard as often. To achieve this, we did things a little differently than we would normally do.

There were around 200 events, including a series of in-depth discussion events, run in eight locations across the country, discussing some of the emerging themes. We encouraged you to have your own discussions and feedback to us. We also encouraged you to contribute online via our dedicated Fairer Scotland social media platforms.

We asked you to identify the issues that matter to you most and suggest what could be done to make Scotland fairer. We got a broad range of opinion from individuals, organisations and groups of people who came together to take part in fairer Scotland discussions.

Everyone's voice is equally important to us and so every contribution was treated in exactly the same way, whether it came from an individual person or a major organisation. We read or listened to your feedback, whether it was a postcard, a video, an email, a written summary of your event or a comment on social media. However you got in contact, we gave your feedback the same attention.

We categorised each piece of communication received into a broad range of topics, from taxation to transport, equalities to education, and housing to health. A full list of the topics raised is included at the end of this report.

In summarising the wealth of information received, we identified five core themes that we think reflect your views. These are:

- Work and living standards.
- Homes and communities.
- Early years, education and health.
- Community participation and public services.
- Respect and dignity.

The remainder of this report discusses these themes in more detail and highlights the key issues you raise.

## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

- The aim of this report is to provide a snapshot of the key issues raised during the Fairer Scotland discussions. Given the breadth of those discussions, this report includes many ideas about policy reserved to Westminster and proposals for business and other sectors, as well as covering issues devolved to the Scottish Parliament.
- 2. It does not present a national or representative view. While we promoted the idea of the whole country talking about Fairer Scotland, we appreciate that not everyone did! Therefore, it's important to be clear that this is a snapshot of views from the many of you who did get involved.
- 3. We haven't responded in the report to the ideas and issues you put forward. We've received so much information that we need time to give careful consideration to your views. We plan to publish a social justice action plan later in 2016. In the meantime, we will continue to address the issues highlighted in the discussions.
- 4. The report does not contain every comment received. We've worked hard to capture every view offered but it is not practical to reproduce everything that was said during Fairer Scotland in a concise report. Our hope is that you recognise the key themes and issues from your involvement in the discussion even if your specific point doesn't feature in this report.

The report addresses five key themes and highlights ideas and suggestions under each. These are:

- Work and living standards this theme covers ideas around income and employment; pay and conditions; benefits; childcare; and poverty.
- Homes and communities this theme covers ideas around housing affordability and access; housing quality; and community environment.
- Early years, education and health this theme covers ideas around childcare; education; parenting; mental and physical health; health and social care integration; and carers.
- Community participation and public services – this theme covers ideas around local democracy; grassroots participation; and the role, design and accessibility of public services.
- Respect and dignity this theme covers ideas around respect and dignity for all; public attitudes; and specific issues concerning equalities groups and minority groups.

# **WORK AND LIVING STANDARDS**

Having a decent standard of living is a key theme to emerge from the discussion. For many, that means having a job that pays a fair wage and treats people fairly.

Access to jobs and support to find employment is therefore discussed. A key point made is for job seekers to receive more individually tailored support to ensure they find work that they want to do.

There are a number of comments on providing employment opportunities for specific groups and how more support should be provided to do this. Mentoring schemes for young people is one suggested example. Extending the age threshold of the Modern Apprenticeship scheme to better accommodate disabled people is another.

Level of income is also discussed. The idea of every person having an adequate level of income is raised, with a number of ways suggested as to how to do this. More people being paid the Living Wage and increases to both the living and minimum wages are suggested. Paying apprentices more is another idea put forward.

#### Tackling poverty is another key issue,

with a general feeling that society should be doing everything it can to end poverty in all its forms e.g. child poverty; food poverty; and fuel poverty. Addressing poverty is recognised as being key to creating a fairer Scotland. The 'poverty premium' is discussed...
how those living in poverty are further
disadvantaged through, for example,
increased utility costs and lack of access
to affordable credit. Legislation to
prevent high interest lenders from
operating is one suggested solution.
Another is that energy costs should be
made the same regardless of how you
pay for your fuel.

Improvements in working conditions is also discussed. Specific ideas include: greater flexibility in employment, with employers to give more consideration to individual employee circumstances; equal pay between women and men, and between people of different ages, if they are doing the same job; and bringing an end to zero hours contracts to provide more work and wage security.

#### Linked to this is the issue of childcare.

There are many comments on the costs of childcare and a view that more affordable childcare would help parents wishing to work. Greater flexibility within childcare is also suggested as a way to improve employment prospects. More provision and more affordable wraparound care for school-aged children is another prominent point raised.

# **HOMES AND COMMUNITIES**

The additional costs of pre-school or school activities, such as trips, clothing, photographs, etc. is also discussed as having an adverse impact on income levels for those with children. Increasing the school clothing grant is one suggestion made to help with this.

Affordability and access are the key issues raised about housing. There are a number of calls for smaller, more affordable housing that will allow those on lower incomes to buy. Similarly, there are many comments which say that rent levels, mainly in the private rented sector, are too high and further controls should be put in place. One suggestion made is the introduction of a rent cap.

More private housing, to both buy and rent, and more local authority housing, are common points, with a few comments calling for more housing in rural areas.

**Homelessness is discussed**, with calls for more to be done to address this issue. Better engagement with homeless people is one idea put forward.

The housing allocation process is also mentioned, with a common suggestion being to pay more attention to individual needs in this process, especially for vulnerable groups of people. This was a particular issue raised in relation to the migrant and refugee community.

Housing support for disabled people is discussed, with suggestions to improve more support for young disabled people moving out of the parental home. Also, making sure all housing is accessible for disabled people is another point raised.

Housing quality is discussed. Improving the standard of housing, in both the private rented sector and in local authority provided housing, is a key point. A variety of ideas are suggested on how to achieve this, including: tougher penalties for landlords providing sub-standard housing; tougher regulations for house builders; and upgrading/modernising of existing housing stock. Also, there are a number of comments calling for all housing to be more energy efficient.

# Increasing communal spaces and facilities

so that local communities can come together is a key issue. This includes indoor space where people can hold meetings and run activities; and safe, outdoor green space that people can use, for example, for community gardening.

There are a number of suggestions to make better use of existing community facilities to provide this space, such as schools and public libraries.

# **HOMES AND COMMUNITIES**

There are also calls to increase the level of community activities for people to access. There is a particular focus on young people, especially in rural areas, with specific ideas including: more evening activities; free or inexpensive access to leisure services; more youth spaces such as youth cafes; and more youth clubs.

**Community safety is discussed**, with requests for more community policing and greater visibility of local police in the community. This is a common issue raised by individuals and groups from the migrant and refugee community who contributed to the discussion.

# **EARLY YEARS, EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

Childcare is another key issue in the discussion and considered important in terms of parents accessing work. There are many comments which suggest flexibility and choice are equally as important as availability of childcare, particularly for parents who work outside of nursery or school hours. More breakfast and after school clubs to help with this is a common suggestion.

There are also several comments about providing childcare during school holidays as these periods can prove difficult and potentially expensive for parents, especially those without extended families who are reliant on private childcare during these times.

**Support for parents is discussed to a lesser degree.** The main points raised include: more supportive information for parents; equal rights for fathers; better paternity and maternity leave arrangements; and additional support for adoptive parents.

There are specific comments on support for parents of disabled children or children with additional support needs. The main points raised here are for services to remain in place for the long term, and that there is more support for disabled children or children with additional support needs in school. Specific suggestions include more carers in special schools and better training for school staff.

**For children looked after by the care system,** the key point raised is the need for adequate support when they leave care.

Education and health and social care are two of the standout topics in the discussion.

There are a range of views as to how education should be delivered. There is some focus given to starting school later, with reference to the Scandinavian countries, and class sizes and teacher/pupil ratios another issue discussed.

There are various points raised about the school curriculum. A common one is that there should be more variety of subjects taught to include topics such as health; how to vote/get involved in politics; entrepreneurialism/how to start a business; and life skills – budgeting, preparing a meal, nutrition, etc.

There is also a view that vocational learning should have parity with academic learning, and that greater value be placed on vocational study. Apprenticeships and trade schools are two ways suggested to encourage young people to follow vocational career pathways.

# **EARLY YEARS, EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

There are a number of comments that suggest pupils and students with disabilities need greater levels of support. Further support in school for disabled children is mentioned, as is support for disabled students in further education and higher education. For example, by providing access to transport. Additional support for disabled people moving from education to employment is also suggested.

On health, nutrition and access to healthy food is a key focus. There are a number of ideas suggested as to how to improve nutrition, with an emphasis on child nutrition through healthier school meals and availability of fresh fruit in school. Educating parents on nutrition and providing warnings on unhealthy foods such as sweets and fizzy drinks are other key points.

The cost of healthy food is also raised with comments that it is too high or that unhealthy food is cheaper. Some ideas to reduce these costs include offering tax relief on healthy foods, through VAT, or local suppliers, through business rates relief. Also, one idea suggested is to levy tax on unhealthy foods to make them less appealing.

Mental health is another key issue in the discussion. One of the main points raised is a desire to see mental health services to be the same as physical health services, both in terms of access to mental health services and quality. A particular point made is that there should be more child and adolescent mental health services.

# Further reductions in waiting times to access health services is a common point.

This is a particular issue in connection with mental health services, especially for people in crisis situations. There is also a focus on GP appointments, with comments suggesting appointments are difficult to get and often too short. This last point is a particular concern of those whose first language is not English.

# Health service integration and management of the NHS is also discussed.

A common view is that the NHS could be further improved if there were greater levels of integration between different health departments. One example given is that greater integration of services would enable more efficient sharing of patient information and allow patients with multiple or complex issues to access integrated care at one location.

# **EARLY YEARS, EDUCATION AND HEALTH**

There are some comments suggesting there should be further integration between health and other service departments, such as social work; housing; and education services.

In terms of resourcing the NHS, a common view is that it should continue to remain free at the point of access and that further investment should be provided to ensure it receives the level of funding it requires. A small number of comments suggest that people also need to take more responsibility for their own health and not rely completely on the NHS to protect their health simply because it is free.

#### Carers are one of the key groups

**discussed** and support for carers is a key theme. There is acknowledgement for the role that carers play and there are calls for greater provision of sufficient respite for carers, and for carers' allowance to be raised to reflect the economic value they contribute to the Scottish economy.

#### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES**

Public involvement in democracy is one of the most talked about issues in the discussion. There are a large number of comments that advocate further opportunities for local people be involved and play a part in decisions that affect them and their community.

There is a focus on more decisions being taken locally and at a community level. One suggestion is to make better use of community councils, while others suggest reforming community councils to make them more representative of local communities and give them more authority.

There is acknowledgement that people should get involved themselves to improve things through, for example, local politics or volunteering. This issue is made with particular reference to children and young people, with a suggestion that they should be encouraged and engaged to play an active role in shaping their lives more generally.

Support for community groups and organisations to allow participation at a grass roots level is a key issue. This links to an earlier point raised on access to community space but is also about providing further funding support for community groups. One suggestion made is to simplify the community funding landscape to make it easier for community groups to apply for and access funds.

Access to information is considered critical to community engagement, as is the provision of feedback to generate trust and maintain community involvement.

The role of National Government and the way in which it works is also raised. The importance of partnership working across political parties and between sectors, with a focus on working towards the common good, are the main points raised.

The role of public services is another standout issue to emerge from the discussion. The key point raised is that services should 'fit' the needs of people. One idea suggested is that service users should be listened to and involved at the service design stage.

This comes through in views given on integrated health services and education. It also comes across in issues raised on transport where suggestions on how transport services could be improved include: improved routes and greater reliability of services; and greater integration of transport services for rural communities, such as bus and ferry services.

# **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES**

Being able to access public services is another key issue. On one hand, there are many comments that suggest quality public services should be available to everyone regardless of where they live. On the other is the view that the availability of services should be based on where they are needed most and that access to them should reflect this.

Access to services is a particular issue raised in relation to rural communities, with several comments suggesting that more resources are needed to improve access. Improving broadband to provide more access to online services is one example given. Faster broadband speeds and better mobile coverage in general is the key issue around digital services.

More local services, such as local clubs and activities, and greater ease of access to key services such as health and education are key issues raised. Having translation services available for non-English speakers in health centres and schools is one example offered.

The costs of public services are also raised in the discussion. A number of comments suggest keeping free services currently in place such as free prescriptions; TV licence for over 75s; free bus travel for over 60s; and a free higher education system.

However, many comments suggest that public transport costs are too high and that costs to travel the same distance vary depending where in the country the journey takes place. An additional point raised in relation to bus services is that the same service can vary in cost depending on the service provider. Therefore, one idea offered is to make transport costs for the same service or for level of service the same across public transport providers regardless of where in the country the journey takes place.

In the same way, there are calls for the cost of energy supply to be the same regardless of where you are located or the means by which you pay for it. This is a particular issue for those who use pre-paid meters and those in remote locations.

#### **RESPECT AND DIGNITY**

Respect and dignity are strong themes that emerge from the discussion across a number of different topics. Ending discrimination of any kind and ensuring equality of opportunity for all are common points made.

A number of views are given on public attitudes. There is a want for people to have more trust and respect for each other, as well as being more accepting of others.

There are many comments that discuss negative media portrayal of certain sections of society and how this reinforces the stigma that exists around these groups and communities. More funding for local media to promote positive community stories is suggested to combat this, as is greater community voice more generally in the national media.

The way that people are treated by public services is a key point. This is particularly discussed in respect of social security and the welfare system.

There are many comments suggesting that the welfare system should be fairer, more helpful, provide security and treat everyone with respect. As part of this, a number of comments suggest that sanctions should be removed as a mechanism.

On specific welfare benefits, restoring lifetime awards for people with permanent or deteriorating conditions is one suggestion. Another is that fit for work assessments should take greater account of mental health status and GPs' recommendations to provide a rounded assessment.

A more personal, empathetic and compassionate service, offering tailored support for job seekers is also called for. Having a designated adviser is one idea offered as to how this could be achieved.

There is a view that all benefit claimants should be made fully aware of the benefits they are entitled to by right and that assistance should be offered to complete the necessary forms to make a claim.

Creating a more welcoming and less intimidating job centre environment is also discussed. The removal of security guards from the premises; provision of more privacy for job seekers; and creation of a more child-friendly space are some of the suggestions made as to how to achieve this.

# As part of the Fairer Scotland process, there was extra effort made to speak to minority groups and equality groups.

Some of the points raised have already been discussed in earlier sections of this report but there are a number of specific views offered by these communities of people around the broad theme of respect and dignity.

## RESPECT AND DIGNITY

There are a number of calls for further inclusion of disabled people across all areas of society, particularly with respect to finding employment and in skills attainment across education.

**Greater representation of minority ethnic communities** in senior positions and in key decision making roles is also suggested.

Greater representation of women across society is raised, including that there should be a 50/50 gender split in company boardrooms and senior positions. Reducing the gender pay gap is another key issue.

The main issues in respect of the **migrant** and refugee population are that they should be allowed to contribute to Scottish society while they are awaiting the outcome of citizenship applications, through work, volunteering and/or education. One idea suggested is for a system that recognises the existing qualifications of migrants and allows them to access appropriate employment. There are also calls for a reduction in the wait for citizenship applications to be processed.

For non-English speakers, there are requests for more English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, along with greater provision of translation services in key public services such as schools and health environments.

Promotion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender, Questioning and Intersex
(LGBTQI) issues across society is
suggested in order to generate greater
awareness, with transgender issues a
particular focus of the comments made.
One suggestion is to raise more
awareness of LGBTQI issues in schools to
combat bullying and discrimination at an
early age.

The key point raised relative to the Gypsy/Traveller community is that more needs to be done to include Gypsy Traveller communities in local areas, with one suggestion for them to be represented on community councils.

The re-integration of offenders into society is also raised. Providing adequate support to achieve this is the key issue, with suitable housing, tailored employment support and benefits in place on release, some of the ideas suggested.

The issue of care for older people is also discussed and how this needs a flexible approach. The issue of loneliness is raised as is the need to address social isolation of elderly people. Intergenerational activities is one suggested way of reducing isolation for older people.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

We plan to publish a social justice action plan later in 2016.

For further information about the Fairer Scotland process, you can visit: **www.fairer.scot**.

We are committed to ensuring as many people as possible access this report. If you have ideas on how we can make this report more accessible to you, such as providing versions in a different format or language, please get in touch with **Karen Armstrong** on **0300 244 1165** or via email **karen.armstrong@gov.scot**.

If you have any questions regarding the analysis, please get in touch with **Paul Sloan** on **0141 244 5400** or via email **paul.sloan@gov.scot**.

# **FULL LIST OF TOPICS RAISED**

Income and Employment

**Equalities** 

Governance and Participation

Health and Social Care

Education

**People and Communities** 

Housing

Social Security/Welfare

Infrastructure

Children and Young People

**Justice** 

**Transport** 

**Environment** 

**Taxation** 

**Business** 

Culture

Economy

Engagement

Foreign Policy and Defence

ABCUL Scotland

**Abolish Poverty and Starvation** 

AccessAble Borders

**ACE Glasgow** 

**ACVO** 

African and Caribbean Women's

Association

African Caribbean Network

Afrikan Lanarkshire for Mental Health

Afroscots United

Alternativity

Alexandria Armed Veterans Association

Alliance Scotland

**Amina** 

**ANDESCOT** 

Assembly for Tackling Poverty

Barnardos

Barrat Circle Residents Action Group

**BEMIS** 

**BE United** 

**British Deaf Association** 

**British Dental Association** 

BSL and Linguistic Access Working Group

**Burnhill Youth Project** 

Capability Scotland

Carers Scotland

Carrick Community Council Forum

Castle Huntley

CEMVO

Central Scotland Regional Equality

Council

Centre for Scottish Public Policy

Centre for Entrepreneurship Eduction

Scotland

Chartered Institute for Housing

Children in Poverty Inverclyde

Citizens Advice Scotland

CLEAR Buckhaven

Clermistoun and Dumbrae Gala

Clydebank Independent Resource Centre

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

Cobhair Bharraigh

Community News

**Community Transport Association** 

Cornfields Scotland

**COSLA** 

Craighead Institute for Life and Faith

Craigmillar Community Alliance Trust

Crisis

**Cuthelton Social Club** 

**Developing Potential SCIO** 

**Dumfries and Galloway Multicultural** 

Association (DAGMC)

**Dumfries SIMS** 

**Dundee Central Mosque** 

Dundee International Women's Centre

**Dunfermline Broomhead Tenants and** 

**Residents Association** 

**Economic Development Association** 

Edinburgh Development Group

**Education Scotland Strategic Funding** 

Partnership

**Empowering Minorities** 

**Enable Scotland** 

**Equality Network** 

Equip Men

**EVOC** 

Fa'side Women's Group

Feel Good Women's Group

Fife City Council

Fife Gingerbread Organisation

Finn's Place

Forth Valley Migrant Support Network

Foxley Bowling Club & Fullerton Park

**Community Group** 

Gavinburn Parent Council

General Practitioners at the Deep End

Giffnock Community Council

Glasgow Afghan United

Glasgow Disability Alliance

Glasgow Homelessness Network

**Glasgow City Mission** 

Govan Church of the Nazarene

**Govanhill Baths** 

Govanhill Women's Friends Group

Gypsy Big Luck

Halbeath Resident's and Tenants

Association

Hillhead Customer Care Working Group

Hillhead Welfare Rights Group

Home Start West Lothian

**IGBO** Welfare Union

Improvement and Development Scotland

**Inclusion Scotland** 

Independent Living in Scotland (ILiS)

Jewels of Islam

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Kenyan Women in Scotland Association

Lady Alice Bowling Club

Learning Disability Alliance Scotland

Learning for Sustainability Scotland

Leith Link Up

Lewis Castle College

Libertie Proiect

Link Up Women's Support Centre

Linknet

Links SCIO

Listen 2 Us

Lithuanians In Scotland

Midlothian Voluntary Action

Minority Communities Addiction Support

Services

Minority Ethnic Mediation Glasgow REACH community Health Project

Mossblown Regeneration Group Reidvale Community Council

Museum Galleries Scotland Renfrewshire Council

Muslim Council of Scotland Renfrewshire Credit Union

Muslim Senior Welfare Club **RNIB** 

Neilston Development Trust Royal Society for the Prevention of

Ruchazie Community Church

Scottish Community Development Centre

Accidents Nepalese Community (Aberdeen)

**RSA Scotland** North Ayrshire Health and Social Care

**Partnership** 

North Edinburgh Time Bank **Rural Parliament** 

North Kelvin Sports Development Group Sauchie Community Group

**Nourish Scotland** Scotland Zambia Association

One Parent Families Scotland Scotland's Women's Convention

Oxfam Scotland Scottish Allotment and Garden Society

PKVAS (MEAD) Scottish Best Value Housing Network

Parkhead Youth Project Scottish Consortium for Learning

Disability People First

People Know How and Community Health Exchange

Perth and Kinross Council

Scottish Environment Link Pilton Community Health Project

Scottish Human Rights Commission

Scottish Legal Aid Board

Scottish Older People's Assembly

Scottish Refugee Council

Scottish Refugee Policy Forum

Scottish Through Care

**Project Search** Scottish Women's Convention

Scottish Youth Parliament

Radiant and Brighter

**Polmont Young Offenders** 

**Poverty Truth Commission** 

Positive Prisoner Positive Futures

Port Mor Lunch Club

Poverty Alliance

**Pulsion** 

SCVO

Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Support

Group

Signpost

Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary

**Organisations** 

Social Enterprises Scotland

South Lanarkshire Council

Southcraig School

Southwest Glasgow Carers Centre

St Brides Community Centre

STAND International

Stepping Stones for Families

Street Cones Scotland

Sunnybank Community Centre

Support in Mind

**TAG** 

Tenant Participation Advisory Service

The Disabled and Young People Advisory

Group

The Garioch Partnership

The Scottish Assembly for Tackling

**Poverty** 

The Star Project

The Thursday Club

The Tin Cat

The Transport Credit Union

The Volunteer Centre East Ayrshire

The Wise Group

Time to Heal

Toonspeak

**Total Craigroyston** 

Transition Edinburgh

Transition Edinburgh Pentlands

Unity for Integration Project

Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay on behalf of Castlebay Community Council

Voluntary Action Barra & Vatersay on behalf of Northbay Community Council

Voluntary Action. East Renfrewshire

Volunteer Edinburgh (EaRN)

**VOX Liminis (KIN)** 

We Step Together

West Dunbartonshire Community

**Foodshare** 

West Dunbartonshire Ethnic Women's

Group

West Lothian Health Improvement and

Health Inequalities Alliance

Women's Centre, Glasgow

X-change Scotland

Young @heart 50+ Club

Young Scot

Ysort it - Clydebank

Zone Initiative



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