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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola Sturgeon". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister of Scotland

INTRODUCTION FROM THE FIRST MINISTER

These are not normal times, and this is not a normal Programme for Government. COVID-19 – the single greatest public health crisis of our lifetimes – has had a profound impact on our health, economy and society, indeed our whole way of life. The reality of those impacts, and the scale of the challenge we face in combatting them, permeates through everything we are setting out in this Programme for Government.

Our clear priority for this period through to the end of this Parliament in May is dealing with the economic, health, and social crisis that the coronavirus has brought. Beyond that immediate priority, we must consider how we build back fairer and stronger. We have an opportunity not simply to go back to how things were, but to address with a renewed impetus many of the deep-seated challenges our country faces. We must take that opportunity.

It is worth reflecting, though, on how we came together as a country during lockdown. Every single person made sacrifices. We isolated ourselves from our friends and families, closed businesses that we had worked hard to build and went out of our way to help those who needed it most. We marvelled at the selflessness of our NHS and care staff who supported those with the virus and we were thankful for those who worked to provide us with food and the other vital services that we needed. It was heart-warming but we shouldn't be surprised - so many of our fellow citizens go the extra mile every day.

We also need to reflect on the community response to the lockdown. We witnessed the incredible efforts of the third sector, community organisations and volunteers who assisted our public services and provided lifeline support. People across Scotland lent a hand to try and minimise the isolation of lockdown – whether through volunteering to support those shielding or checking in on a neighbour who needed a bit of extra help. Councils and community organisations stepped up to provide housing and food to those in need. Parents became teachers while working from home or on furlough and children adapted to not being at school. And of course grannies, granddads, mums, dads, siblings, friends – the people we needed the most – became faces on a screen or voices from a phone.

We must also thank our police officers who completely changed how they work and pivoted, almost overnight, to supporting us in suppressing the virus. Police Scotland have also recognised the unprecedented nature of the powers they have been given, and acted to ensure that their response was proportionate and had policing by consent at its heart.

The response to the pandemic from people across Scotland has highlighted the countless examples of compassion and courage on the part of our fellow citizens. People acted to help others without thought of any formal acknowledgment for their deeds. As we go forward we want the individuals and organisations who sacrificed so much to have the appreciation and special recognition they deserve.

That is why, as we move toward recovery from COVID-19, we will consult widely on how best to allow our nation to show our collective appreciation for these remarkable efforts.

Of course, we have also lost so many to this virus, each one a personal tragedy, and at a time when families have not been able to grieve as they would normally do. The loss for many will be overwhelming and the community spirit we've shown in suppressing the virus will be just as important in helping people to recover from it.

For many of us this will be a time in our lives we will never forget and one that we do not want to repeat. That's why it's so important for us to continue to keep the virus under control. This Programme for Government sets out how we intend to do that. Suppressing the virus is the key objective for this government in the coming months, but at the same time we must also look to the future – to think about how we can help our people, businesses and communities rebound from this pandemic.

The Scottish Government has already made commitments to tackle child poverty, deliver a net zero society, improve our public services, end homelessness, and make clean, green long term investments that will transform our society and build a wellbeing economy. **COVID-19 means the starting point is different but the urgency is greater. This Programme for Government is based on our strong belief that in recovering from this virus it must not be business as usual. We must use this moment to make significant advances to deliver the fairer, greener, more prosperous Scotland we all want to see.**

Central to that recovery is a **new national mission to help create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs.**

We will work with employers and individuals to build the skills and infrastructure that we all need to succeed, in the industries of the future.

To help our young people into good jobs at a time when they are most vulnerable we will deliver our Youth Guarantee – ensuring every young person has access to a job, education, training or development programme. To support older workers at risk of redundancy we will provide re-training opportunities through our new National Transition Training Programme. The knowledge created in our colleges and universities will of course be vital to how we give people the skills, and our economy the innovation, to recover. And we will ensure that the jobs created and supported are good jobs. We will work with employers to support their employees with flexible working that protects the individual and increases productivity for businesses.

We will work across the public sector to ensure it plays its part in creating new opportunities and improving the quality of people's working lives. We will provide greater opportunities for those groups who need the most support to get into work, to ensure that no one is left behind, and we will use the tools of government to drive better quality jobs, focusing our funding on employment with high standards and good wages.

Of course, **our economic recovery must be a green recovery.** Even before the pandemic, we knew we had significant work to do in order to improve the state of nature and meet our statutory commitment to be a net zero society by 2045. The impacts of the crisis have reinforced the need for that, but also the opportunities it presents. This Programme sets out the next phase of our Green New Deal announced in 2019. We will take forward ambitious commitments to transform how we heat our homes; giving us the opportunity to meet our climate and environment ambitions, whilst building a better economy and creating jobs.

Putting a green recovery at the forefront of our approach offers many businesses the chance to innovate and diversify, and it gives individuals the opportunity to retrain and upskill in new and high-growth areas. As part of our commitment we will dedicate **£100m over the next five years to a Green Jobs Fund**, investing alongside businesses and organisations to support new and increased opportunities for green job creation across Scotland.

We will also support our businesses to decarbonise, thereby developing new employment opportunities and driving down emissions. We will immediately put a clear new focus on our updated Climate Change Plan, ensuring it reflects our new starting point and the central importance of a green recovery to Scotland's progress, and the Infrastructure Investment plan will reflect our commitment to tackling climate change. We will ensure our rural economy and Scotland's rich natural resources and biodiversity are central to our economic, environmental, and social wellbeing.

Underpinning all of our efforts will be a clear focus on **driving digital innovation.** While the pandemic has seen many businesses forced to close their doors, those that are most digitally able have been best placed to continue to deliver their products, while others have found new digital ways to deliver traditional services. We must keep pace with digital innovation – in doing so, we can help boost economic growth, drive innovation and protect businesses against any future crisis. That is why we quickly commissioned Mark Logan, former COO of Skyscanner, to undertake a review of the Scottish tech sector, giving us a blueprint to raise it to world-class status. We are now working to take forward his ambitious recommendations, including the establishment of a national network of hubs for tech start-ups, offering world-class training programmes, intensive mentoring, and access to funding opportunities.

We will also **tackle digital exclusion** which is central to our commitment to promote equality and help our young people grasp their potential. Digital capability and connectivity is vital to all of our people. Just as businesses with a strong digital presence were best positioned to adapt during lockdown, people who were best connected were able to manage the isolation of lockdown most effectively. This Programme for Government includes a drive to end digital exclusion in Scotland through our **Connecting Scotland** programme. Providing technology and connectivity to those that need it can open up access to education, health care and employment opportunities as well as counter social isolation. It is a potentially transformational policy for those who will benefit and an example of where economic and social action can and should come together to raise our quality of life.

We can also deliver transformational change through our approach to housing. The crisis has reiterated the fundamental importance of safe and good quality housing for all – that means continuing our programme of housebuilding, and ensuring both new and existing homes are energy efficient and high quality, creating jobs as part of our investment in construction and retro-fitting.

This crisis also gives us an opportunity to radically rethink the places we live in, our homes and our communities. We want to ensure our communities can become vibrant hubs for the people who live there – to work, shop, learn, keep active, and socialise. And we will ensure equality and human rights is embedded throughout our response, not least in response to the global awakening we have seen to continued racial injustices through the Black Lives Matter movement.

For some people the experience of lockdown showed that their lives could be improved through active travel, exercise, access to local or online services, working from or closer to home, and access to shared green spaces. While it is natural for people to slip back into old habits as lockdown has eased, throughout this Programme for Government we will take steps that support the idea of 20 minute neighbourhoods – where people can meet their needs within a 20 minute walk from their house – enabling people to live better, healthier lives and supporting our net zero ambitions.

And for the most vulnerable – those who cannot take a roof over their head for granted and who may be experiencing homelessness – we will radically scale up our efforts to guarantee access to a safe, warm place to call home. We showed during the pandemic that we can make rapid and radical progress in tackling homelessness, so we must continue with the same determination to ensure no one returns to our streets and no one has to sleep rough.

We will also ensure the best start in life for our children and young people, and enable them to grasp their potential. This Programme for Government underlines our commitment to deliver 1,140 hours free early learning and childcare and to begin to go further, looking at wraparound care options that will give families more choice, greater opportunities to work, and greater financial freedom.

In schools, our investment to tackle the attainment gap has never been more important, and we are investing £135 million in extra resources to support educational catch up and recruit more teachers. We are also increasing the digital learning opportunities for our young people. This will build resilience in the face of COVID-19 and create new opportunities for young people to learn.

We will build on our strong offer of support to young people who are missing out on the important immersive element of their education. That includes work with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on the expansion of the digital schooling available through e-Sgoil and within this a Gaelic offer that will increase the number of subjects open to young people. This will in turn open up opportunities in the world of work, including apprenticeships.

Building on our efforts to support our young people, this Programme delivers one of the most significant pieces of legislation since devolution. The UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Bill will bring the rights conferred in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child directly into Scottish law. This Bill will put power in the hands of our children and young people and reaffirms our commitment to make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up. We will also keep The Promise we made to Scotland's care experienced young people.

Of course delivering on all of these ambitions requires maintaining a grip on the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and remobilising our NHS.

To a large extent this is in each of our hands. We must continue to work together to suppress the virus so that we can protect lives and avoid a further damaging lockdown. We don't want businesses to have to close again or to have to ask people to isolate from loved ones.

For that reason the most significant economic and social policy of this coming parliamentary year will be our commitment to testing, contact tracing, surveillance and response.

Central to that will be continuing to suppress the virus, building upon the early successes of our work on surveillance and response and NHS Test and Protect, as we continue to remobilise the health service. This will be supported by the launch of our proximity tracing app, **Protect Scotland**, later this month.

As we adjust to living with COVID-19 for the immediate future, we must **promote lifelong health and wellbeing**. Our health and care services, and the staff within them, have responded heroically throughout the pandemic, and we will forever owe them a significant debt of gratitude. As Agenda for Change pay negotiations get underway and as we consider the future of care services, we have an opportunity to consider how we value and reward those who work in our health and care sector and to consider how we best provide care services in the future.

In recent years we have ensured we put our health services on the strongest possible footing to face the pandemic – with record workforce and funding levels – but we must go further in **embedding a world-class public health system**. In any world-class system, the rights of patients must also be embedded and safeguarded at all times. So we will establish the role of a Patient Safety Commissioner.

The pandemic has shown the positive changes we can make to how and where we deliver healthcare, and we must lock that in. By accelerating the transition to a new model of community NHS care and supporting the digitisation of services, such as NHS Near Me we will ensure people get the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

The pandemic has also reiterated the need for a radical rethink of our model of social care, with support growing for a **National Care Service**. We will establish an independent review of the care system to examine how adult social care can be most effectively reformed to deliver a national approach to care and support services. This will include consideration of a National Care Service.

We will renew our work on **improving population health**, in recognition of the impact the virus has had. This will have a clear focus on mental health and wellbeing and also the specific impacts the virus has had on existing health inequalities. While of course there are causes of poor health that we can tackle and treat, at their core they are determined by social inequalities. It is why the wellbeing economy that we want to build is so vital; a healthier workforce means a healthier economy, and vice versa.

Clearly people's income is a vital part of that and we know the pandemic has caused greater financial insecurity for many, so our continued investment in the social safety net will be vital in helping mitigate some of the worst impacts of the crisis. We've already expanded the Scottish Welfare Fund, made an additional payment to unpaid carers, and provided additional support for emergency food supplies. And in November applications will open for the new Scottish Child Payment – a vital tool in our fight against child poverty. Payments will be made from the end of February 2021, delivering on a key commitment of this government.

Taken together this Programme shows the determination of the Government not just to help Scotland through this crisis but to recover strongly, with a renewed focus on what matters to people across the country. It's worth underlining, though, that we are in uncharted waters. Our recovery from this virus will not be achieved by this, or any, government alone. It will rely on us all pulling in the same direction, looking out for each other, and trying new approaches. This virus has rewritten what we would have considered normal in our lives but we cannot, and should not, let it define our futures; that is for us to do, collectively. If, however, we take on this challenge with the same commitment to collaboration, innovation and kindness that we brought to bear on tackling the virus we can, and will, succeed.

We are of course facing these challenges, and this opportunity for renewal at the same time as having to deal with the untold social and economic damage that leaving the EU will cause. We believe the pandemic and the response to it has demonstrated the need for more co-operation between independent nations, not less, and we will continue to advocate for Scotland's place in Europe, and the world. We will take action where we can to mitigate the very worst effects of EU exit, and to protect the powers of our Scottish Parliament. Fundamentally, the Scottish Government view is that the best future for Scotland is to be an independent country and a member of the European Union.

We have been through difficult times as a country.

Since the start of this crisis, we have asked so much of our public services, individuals and businesses. Each and every one of us has played a part in helping to suppress the spread of and risk from COVID-19. I know these have not been easy times – and for those whose livelihoods are at risk it is still not easy.

But we can and will recover. Our country has world-class institutions, a strong economy and first-rate public services. Most of all we have brilliant people: skilled people, imaginative people, kind people, welcoming people, who will be the lifeblood of how we recover.

We can all contribute to our collective recovery. We can do so by helping stop the spread of the virus, supporting our local community and looking out for each other.

This Programme sets out how we'll help you, help each other.

Among the actions I am setting out in this Programme for Government, we will:

- Launch our proximity tracing app, Protect Scotland, later this month to enhance and support our Test and Protect programme
- Introduce a National Transition Training Fund to provide support to 10,000 people facing redundancy and unemployment
- Introduce the Scottish Youth Guarantee to ensure every young person has the opportunity of work, education, or training
- Set out the first tranche of our £2 billion Low Carbon Fund, including: helping to secure investment of £1.6 billion over the next Parliament in heat and energy efficiency in our homes and buildings, delivering a £100 million Green Jobs Fund, and providing £60 million for industrial decarbonisation
- Put in place an Inward Investment Plan to create 100,000 high value jobs over the next decade and boost GDP
- Establish an Independent Review of adult social care
- Expand digital access to health care to ensure more people can get the treatment they need
- Improve access to community based health services through the launch of Pharmacy First, accelerating the rollout of our Community Treatment and Assessment Centres, and of our COVID-19 hubs
- Open applications for our new Scottish Child Payment in November 2020, with the first payments made in February 2021
- Complete the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes as quickly as it is safe to do so, and set out a 20 year vision for energy efficient, zero carbon housing, with access to outdoor space, transport links, digital connectivity and community services
- Deliver a revolution in children's rights by incorporating the UNCRC into Scots law by the end of this parliament
- Lock in the positive changes in active travel by committing £500 million for transformational infrastructure
- Bring 50,000 people into the digital world through Connecting Scotland and create a World-Class Digital Eco-system in Scotland
- Provide £135 million additional investment to ensure our young people catch-up on any lost education due to COVID-19. This will include funding to recruit 1400 additional teachers and 200 support staff

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed almost everything. Like many countries around the world, we endured a lockdown that has deeply impacted our public services, our economy and our people. It's changed the way we work and socialise and called into question what we once knew as normal.

What began as a public health crisis has become a global economic crisis – growth has stalled, businesses have had to close, and there have been many job losses with the likelihood of more to come. The pandemic has also highlighted, and in many cases worsened, the inequalities in our society with those with the least before the crisis often worst affected by both the health and economic impacts.

But it has also showed us what we are capable of when we come together as a country. We came together to support those who most needed help and support, to innovate in our businesses, and protect jobs, and to redesign how we work, travel and access public services. Delivering on this Programme for Government will require the same collective effort to tackle the fundamental challenges in our society and to ensure that rather than return to business as usual, we use this moment to create the fairer, greener and wealthier country that we all want to see.

The Scottish Government is committed to achieving net zero by 2045, reducing child poverty to less than 10% of children living in relative poverty by 2030, and to building a wellbeing economy. These commitments are central to this Programme for Government. Progress will only be possible through collaboration and a collective determination to succeed. And it will only be possible if we continue to suppress – and preferably eliminate – the virus.

This Programme for Government sets out the Scottish Government's response to these connected challenges and opportunities. It commits to:

- a national mission to create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs – with a particular focus on our young people, supporting retraining and investing in our Green New Deal to tackle climate change
- promoting lifelong health and wellbeing – by tackling COVID-19, remobilising and reforming the NHS and social care and tackling health inequalities
- promoting equality and helping our young people fulfil their potential

A national mission to help create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs:

During the pandemic so far we have provided £2.3 billion investment in our businesses – helping to mitigate some of the worst impacts of lockdown. As we move into the next phase of the pandemic and continue to ease lockdown we must now look to support those who may face redundancy or will not have the job opportunities that would normally be open to them. In doing so we have an opportunity to retrain and reskill people for the jobs of the future. So we commit to using all the tools at our disposal and to working with business and the third sector in **a national mission to help create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs.**

Our commitment to addressing the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change remains unwavering throughout, and delivering a green recovery is at the heart of our response. To support jobs and realise our climate ambitions we are committing to the next tranche of our Green New Deal. We are ramping up and committing to multiyear investments to send a clear signal to supply chains to invest in people and technology, and help us deliver the net zero transition.

We will also take forward the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery.

To support this mission this Programme commits us to:

- A **£60 million Youth Guarantee**, so every young person aged between 16 and 24 will be guaranteed an opportunity at university or college, an apprenticeship programme, employment including work experience, or participating in a formal volunteering programme. This will be backed by additional funding for apprenticeships and the new Job Start Grant
- An initial **£25 million National Training Transition Fund** to provide retraining opportunities for people who have lost their jobs or are at risk of doing so
- Create a **£100 million Green Jobs fund**, investing alongside a range of sectors – such as manufacturing, tech, and land based organisations – to support new and increased opportunities for green job creation across Scotland
- An **additional £2.35 million for the Parental Employability Support Fund** for those most at-risk of poverty, including disabled, young, and ethnic minority parents
- A **£1.6 billion** investment over the next Parliament to **decarbonise the way we heat our home and our buildings**, reducing emissions, tackling fuel poverty and creating new jobs
- £60 million to support **decarbonisation of the industrial and manufacturing** sector – driving down emissions and protecting jobs
- A **new Inward investment strategy**, to give people new skills, and attract investment and jobs into Scotland, with the potential to generate 100,000 high value jobs over the next decade
- Invest £1.5 million in the next phase of the **Unlocking Ambition** programme, which provides grant and specialist wraparound support for early stage, growth potential businesses, with a new focus on low carbon and economic recovery
- **Steadily increase Scotland’s annual infrastructure investment until it is £1.5 billion higher by the end of the next Parliament than in 2019-20**
- **Capitalise the Scottish National Investment Bank with £2 billion over ten years, with a primary mission to support the transition to net zero emissions**
- A **£62 million Energy Transition Fund** to support businesses in the oil, gas and energy sectors over the next five years as they grow and diversify, and help attract private sector investment in the North East
- Work with trade unions and employers to pioneer new ways of **embedding fair work practices** in all workplaces. We will also tackle the discrimination and unfair practices towards minority ethnic people
- Doubling the **Flexible Workforce Development Fund** to £20m – enabling employers to access up to £15,000 each to address skills gaps in their workforce
- Establishing a **national network of world-class start up incubators**, “Tech Scalers”, with the aim of creating and supporting between 300 and 500 high quality start-ups over the next 5 years
- Commit an additional £23m this year to **help more digitally excluded people get online** – providing both devices and internet connections. This will bring the total number of people supported to 50,000 by the end of the year
- Investing **£150 million over the next five years in forestry** to support the economy and our net zero goal

The imperative of keeping COVID-19 under control continues to place constraints on many businesses. However, controlling the virus is a pre-requisite of a sustainable recovery in the medium to longer term. Many businesses will be understandably frustrated about continuing constraints on their activity but we have to balance this against the devastating impact a further national lockdown would have. Suppressing – and working to eliminate – the virus will protect jobs and help employers retain staff and plan more securely for the future. That is why one of our most significant economic investments this year will be in testing, contact tracing and surveillance.

We will continue to argue for an extension of the furlough scheme for those sectors and employers who for public health reasons are still not able to operate or who will struggle most during the recovery and for furlough to be retained in the event of the need for local lockdowns.

Promoting lifelong health and wellbeing

Our health and social care staff have responded heroically throughout this crisis – mobilising the whole system to respond to the pandemic and delivering significant reorganisation to treat those with the virus. We have managed to suppress the virus together and must continue to do so. Our own actions are the first line of defence – these will be supported by Test and Protect, and with community care and hospital support for those that need it.

Delivering Test and Protect to help keep COVID-19 suppressed



As Agenda for Change pay negotiations get underway and as we consider the future of care services, we will consider how we value and reward those who work in our health and care sector. We also commit in this Programme for Government to maintain and increase the support available for staff who have had to work in some of the most difficult conditions imaginable.

As we adjust to living with the virus we must now embed a world-class public health system for the future. The pandemic has shown that we can provide a different type of care; not least by using digital tools to provide quicker and more convenient support for many. For some, online services won't be right so we must ensure people can access the right care, in the right place at the right time so we will accelerate our reforms of how NHS services are provided in the community.

We must also learn lessons from this crisis about our social care system. We will commission an independent review of the social care system. This will include consideration of the creation of a National Care Service. We will also put a renewed focus on tackling health inequalities, and improving quality of life. Before the crisis, we know there were too many people at risk as a result of long term health conditions – the crisis has exacerbated that. We will focus on the determinants of health inequalities, and drive forward our efforts to improve mental health and wellbeing.

This Programme commits us to:

- Continue to develop a **world-class public health service** that builds on our COVID-19 response
- **Continue to suppress – and preferably eliminate – COVID-19.** We will also provide support to those who have the virus and to those who are recovering from it, focusing not just on physical health but also on mental health and social support
- Launch in September a new proximity app, Protect Scotland, to enhance and support **Test and Protect**
- **Remobilise our NHS Services** focusing on (1) a move to deliver safely as many of its normal services as possible; (2) ensuring the capacity that is necessary to deal with the continuing presence of COVID-19; and (3) preparing the health and care services for the wider pressures of the winter season
- **Extend the seasonal flu vaccine** to those working in social care who provide direct personal care, those over 55, those living with someone who is shielding, and those aged 50-54 depending on vaccine supplies, to protect people and our NHS this winter
- Immediately establish **an independent review of adult social care.** This will examine how adult social care can most effectively be reformed to deliver a national approach to care and support services. This will include consideration of a national care service
- Create a new role of **Patient Safety Commissioner**
- **Scale up access to digital care** – for both physical (Near Me video consultations) and mental health (Cognitive Behavioural Therapies) care
- Introduce a high quality and clinically safe **thrombectomy service** in Scotland which will ensure that those who experience severe stroke receive the best possible care, reducing their risk of long term disability
- Develop a nationwide **network of community treatment centres** to help patients manage their conditions and get treatments closer to home
- **Redesign our accident and emergency services** to ensure patients get safe and effective care in a way that protects them from exposure to COVID-19
- **Expand mental health and wellbeing support for health and social care staff**, including the development of a Health and Social Care Mental Health Network and enhanced access to digital resources
- Implement a **Workforce Specialist Service**, which will provide confidential assessment and treatment for mental ill health. This will be delivered through a multi-disciplinary team of mental health care providers, and be supported by the continued delivery of digital wellbeing resources through the **National Wellbeing Hub** and the **National Wellbeing Helpline**
- Establish community **health and wellbeing services that will support children, young people and their families** – and have a particular focus on mental health – across all local authorities in 2021
- Work with Boards to **retain, develop and support Mental Health Assessment Centres**, as part of a broader approach to improving access to appropriate help as quickly as possible for people with mental health needs or distress

Promoting equality and helping our young people grasp their potential

COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on all of our communities and people, but particularly those who were most at-risk to start with. It again highlights why now is the time to think about things differently and to renew our focus on the goals of reducing inequality and improving the quality of life of all of our people.

Children and young people have been particularly impacted, and their life chances risk being fundamentally altered without action. That's why we have provided additional support to councils to help them build additional resilience into our schools and provide greater flexibility in how they can use funds to tackle the attainment gap. We're also closing the digital divide by providing devices and connections for those families who don't have them. This year we will also set out how we will meet our commitment to 1,140 hours of free early learning and childcare. The pandemic also underlines the importance of our commitment to empowering children and young people by incorporating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots law. Our efforts to tackle child poverty are also bolstered by our introduction of the Scottish Child Payment, with applications opening later this year.

Fundamentally though, for our children as well as everyone else, we need to think about the way that we live. The quality of our housing is one of the most important factors in determining our quality of life so we must provide warm and safe homes for all that are part of vibrant communities with services, amenities, jobs and connectivity close to home.

Lockdown also taught us about the importance of considering the quality of the environment that people live in and creating the conditions that promote healthier lifestyles. So we will restart our work on tackling air pollution through the low emissions zones in our cities and commit to over £500m investment over the next five years in active travel infrastructure, access to bikes and behaviour change schemes to promote walking, cycling and wheeling. We will also work with local government to rethink how we can build-in these quality of life, and health enhancing improvements to the communities we live in. Delivering on our health goals, climate goals, and economic goals.

We will also redouble our efforts to mainstream equality and human rights and to improve the life chances of all of our people. This is particularly important in the context of the global Black Lives Matter protests that have ignited around the world. We must do more to understand the barriers that people from our minority ethnic communities face and take action to remove those barriers.

This Programme for Government commits us to:

- Open the **Scottish Child Payment** for applications for children under 6 in November 2020, with the first payments made in February 2021
- Make payments of the new **Child Winter Heating Assistance** in winter 2020
- Deliver increased **early learning and childcare** and set a new target date for the expansion of childcare to 1,140 hours for all three and four year olds, and vulnerable two year olds, across all local authorities by the end of 2020
- Ensure our young people catch up on any lost education due to Covid-19 with £135 million additional investment. This will include funding to recruit **1400 additional teachers and 200 support staff** and help close the poverty related attainment gap
- Support children to learn on-line through the provision of **25,000 chromebooks**
- **Allocate £3 million to support young people to engage in youth work activities**
- Conduct a broad independent review of the Scottish approach to **assessment and qualifications** and learn lessons from this year's SQA results
- Keep **our promise to care experienced young people**, investing £4 million to deliver holistic family support, and establishing an independent oversight Board to drive forward progress
- Delivering a revolution in children's rights, by fully and directly incorporating the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**, to the maximum extent possible within the Scottish Parliament's powers, into Scots law
- Take radical action to **end homelessness** – designing night shelters and dormitory-style provision out of the homelessness system, and continuing to scale up Housing First
- Establish a **£10 million Tenants Hardship Loan Fund**, increase our Discretionary Housing Payments support for tenants by a further £3m; and ensure notice periods continue to be extended until March 2021
- Ensure that by 2040 we live in energy efficient, **zero carbon housing** with access to outdoor space, transport links, digital connectivity and community services. As a first step we will improve the quality of all Scottish Government grant funded homes
- Work with local government to take forward ambitions for **20 minute neighbourhoods** where people can live, work and learn in communities close to home
- Provide over £500 million over five years for large scale, transformational **active travel** infrastructure projects, access to bikes and behaviour change schemes
- Introduce **Low Emissions Zones** in Scotland's major cities in the first half of 2022
- Take forward work to **transform our justice system**, with a specific focus on developing alternatives to prison, and safeguarding witnesses and victims

Putting equality and human rights at the heart of our approach

We will only achieve the ambitions we have set out, and ensure a genuinely collective recovery for everyone, by putting equality and human rights at the heart of our approach. We will ensure everyone in Scotland receives the support they need, and we will take action to tackle the systemic injustices in our society. The last few months have shown us not only the specific and additional pressures of the health crisis on parts of our society, particularly those from minority ethnic communities and older people, but we have also seen a global awakening to the continued racial injustices in our society. We can and must do better to tackle those injustices and ensure a better Scotland for everyone. We will:

- Enable **better collection and use of minority ethnic health data**, to ensure the public health response is properly focused
- Undertaking an audit of past and current initiatives to **tackle systemic racism**
- Take **actions to tackle the barriers faced by our minority communities** in work, education, health, and housing
- Sponsor an independent expert group to recommend how Scotland's existing and future museum collections can better recognise and represent **a more accurate portrayal of Scotland's colonial and slavery history**
- Work with the John Smith Centre to establish a **leadership development programme for people from minority ethnic communities**

The fiscal and Brexit context

We also set out in this Programme for Government the extremely challenging fiscal position that the Scottish Government faces in light of the pandemic. While additional UK Government investment has been welcome, the withdrawal of the furlough scheme creates great anxiety in the Scottish, and indeed UK economy. The Scottish Government would support continued operation

of the Job Retention Scheme by the UK Government, particularly for sectors that are unable to open fully or will continue to struggle as a result of restrictions and for areas where a local lockdown may be required. The pandemic has underlined how little flexibility the Scottish Government has in taking action to deal with such shocks. In the absence of the appropriate powers we repeat our ask of the UK Government, shared by colleagues in the other devolved nations, to provide devolved governments with additional fiscal flexibility.

Of course, the other shock our economy faces is the UK's exit from the European Union and the looming end of the transition period after 31 December 2020. The UK Government's approach looks more and more likely to end in no deal at the end of the year or, at the very best, a threadbare deal that does little to lessen the impacts of our exit. So we set out how we will prepare for that eventuality and defend the powers of the Scottish Parliament in the face of UK Government attempts to undermine devolution.

The combination of the impact of the pandemic and the UK's exit from the European Union demonstrate areas where the limitations on the powers of the Scottish Parliament restrict our ability to protect and renew Scotland as we seek to build back fairer and stronger. The Scottish Government's view is that Scotland should become an independent country.

That is why, before the end of this Parliament, we will publish a draft bill for an independence referendum – setting out the terms of a future referendum clearly and unambiguously to the people of Scotland. This will include the question to be asked, subject to appropriate testing by the Electoral Commission, and the timescale in which we consider the referendum should be held, taking account of the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of publication of the draft bill.

OUTCOMES AND EQUALITY

Scotland's wellbeing framework and our commitment to equality and human rights



Scotland's National Performance Framework sets out a vision for a more successful country, where all of Scotland has the opportunity to flourish through increased wellbeing, and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The impact of COVID-19 has been felt across Scotland. It has disrupted our everyday lives, our families, our communities and our economy. It has had a profound effect on our wellbeing as a nation.

As we recover and rebuild from this crisis, it is more important than ever to be guided by the vision and values of Scotland's National Performance Framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This Programme for Government focuses on delivering what really matters right now to deal with the economic, health and social crisis left in the wake of COVID-19. But it is also steered by the longer-term vision in the National Performance Framework.

The National Performance Framework **has promoting equality at its heart** and a National Outcome to **respect, protect and fulfil human rights**. It challenges us to ensure the needs of our most disadvantaged and marginalised communities are at the forefront as we take action to recover from COVID-19. This Government is driving an ambitious and progressive agenda to ensure equality and human rights are embedded in all we do. We know the impacts of COVID-19 have not been felt equally and it is expected ongoing economic impacts will be felt disproportionately by women, those from minority ethnic communities and disabled people. It is essential we continue to strengthen our approach to equality and human rights across Government **by listening, understanding and involving the people affected by our policies.**

SUPPRESSING THE VIRUS



To achieve the ambitions of this Programme for Government we must successfully keep COVID-19 suppressed. This will depend on our individual actions, on national and local surveillance and response, and on NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system.

As we approach winter we are taking a series of actions which, alongside public compliance with physical distancing and hygiene requirements can help us all to reduce the impact of the coronavirus. We will continue to regularly review the Coronavirus guidance and restrictions against Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis. As we remobilise NHS services safely, we will ensure that capacity is necessary to deal with the continuing presence of COVID-19 as well as preparing the health and care services for the wider pressures of the winter season.

Testing

Since the start of the outbreak, testing capacity has been significantly increased in Scotland, and we will continue to expand it further.

We have also established Test & Protect, and to support contact tracing we will shortly launch a new proximity app "**Protect Scotland**". This will enhance, not replace, the work of our team of contact tracers – it will add an additional means of notifying people who may have been exposed to the virus and require to self-isolate.

Seasonal flu vaccination

Starting this year we will extend the offer of seasonal flu vaccination to all social care workers who provide direct personal care, to all those 55 years and over, all those sharing a household with people who have been shielding for the purposes of COVID-19, and those aged 50-54 depending on vaccine supplies, to protect people and our NHS this winter. This will better protect people at greater risk, and our health service from becoming overwhelmed.

Launch Protect Scotland proximity app to support contact tracing



Alert service for those who previously had to shield to advise of localised risk factors

Following the pause of shielding on 1 August, we are establishing mechanisms by which people at high risk from COVID-19 can access tools and information to help them understand the changing levels of infection in the community. This will allow them to make informed choices about their individual situations. We will give people at the highest risk as much advice as possible and we will change our advice immediately if we feel it's necessary to keep people safe.

Equalities research

Recognising the specific impacts on ethnic minority people as a result of the coronavirus, we commissioned an Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity. We are now working to implement its recommendations, including better collection and use of minority ethnic health data, to ensure our public health response is properly focused.

Building a Scottish Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supply chain

The safety of our essential frontline workforce is an absolute priority and the improvements we have made to distribution routes for PPE in health and social care are helping to make sure we continue to deliver the supplies that are needed. There has also been a significant strengthening of the Scottish supply chain, which builds greater resilience into our PPE stocks.

Research programmes

Working with partners across the UK, Scotland is leading, enabling and delivering world-class COVID-19 research, a key element of our overall response to the pandemic. Scotland forms part of a UK process led by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) and draws on expert advice to prioritise the COVID-19 studies which hold the most potential for tackling the challenges faced. The Chief Scientist Office (CSO) has funded a number of COVID-19 studies being conducted in Scottish Academic Institutions. The research will draw on the very best science and methodologies in Scotland to address specific issues.



Chapter 1

A NATIONAL MISSION TO CREATE NEW JOBS, GOOD JOBS AND GREEN JOBS



COVID-19 has had a massive impact on the global economy and Scotland, like all countries, has been deeply affected. This forces us not just to respond in the immediate term, but also to make choices about the sort of economy we want to have and to focus our efforts on building back fairer and stronger, and addressing the weaknesses that coronavirus has highlighted. The immediate challenge as we recover from the recession caused by COVID-19 is to protect and increase the number of jobs. In this chapter we set out how we will deliver on our new **national mission to help create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs**.

At the height of lockdown, we acted to directly support businesses hit hardest by COVID-19 with a £2.3 billion package to provide loans and business rates reliefs. We also welcomed the investment by the UK Government in the Job Retention Scheme which has prevented a significant increase in unemployment through this phase of the pandemic.

However, as the job retention scheme comes to an end, many industries are still struggling to return to pre-COVID-19 levels of business and this will have a significant impact on employment. It is therefore vital that we help people secure the skills they need to keep them in work, or help them back into employment at the earliest opportunity.



We must make sure that the new jobs we support people to access are good jobs – paying fair wages and complying with high standards. We must also seize the opportunity to create green jobs and train individuals with the skills they need to help us meet our commitment to reach net zero emissions.

It is imperative that **our economic recovery is a green recovery** – not just because it is the right thing to do in the face of the climate crisis, but also because it provides opportunities for new work and growth in today's challenging global market.

Building on last year's ambitious programme of action, we are now setting out new investment that increases the momentum for Scotland's transition to net zero. We are doing this because the opportunity is now greater than ever for Scotland to be at the forefront of global action. Governments around the world are reinforcing their commitment to net zero. Financial markets and investors are working towards greening their investment. Our programme, underpinned by our £2 billion Low Carbon Fund and a Scottish National Investment Bank committed to delivering net zero, will strengthen supply chains, attract investment, encourage businesses to innovate and diversify, and provide new opportunities for people to retrain and upskill in new and high growth areas – while protecting the environment that we all rely on.

We'll support this new skills investment with an enhanced offer on digital. Many employers and households accelerated their adoption of digital tools and technology during lockdown. We are therefore placing a new emphasis on technology to underpin our recovery and we have developed measures to drive up **digital connectivity, innovation and the adoption of digital tools** across

SME and households. Our investment in this area will help more people engage with the digital economy, create jobs, and help more businesses increase productivity and grow more quickly.

We are considering how businesses impacted by the pandemic can be re-capitalised and we continue to engage with the UK Government on this. As outlined in the Scottish Government's Economic Recovery Implementation Plan, a report with recommendations on the management of ownership stakes in private businesses will be put to Ministers in the autumn. This will include a recommendation on the optimum delivery model for the management of such stakes. We will also work towards implementation of the Scottish Law Commission proposals on reforming the law relating to **Moveable Transactions**, with a view to introducing a Bill early in the new Parliament. This will make it easier for businesses and individuals to raise finance, thereby assisting economic recovery.

More widely, we are stepping up efforts to promote Scotland to the world, attracting talent and inward investment, and taking action to boost trade as we implement the recommendations of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery. We are taking steps to support our tourism and culture industries to find a way forward whilst working within the challenging restrictions tackling COVID-19 requires.

Creating jobs and boosting skills

Lockdown has impacted businesses in almost all sectors in Scotland. We've seen it hit tourism and hospitality, food, and the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors particularly hard. Even where sectors have continued to trade, turnover is down, resulting in precarious cash flows. And where sectors have started to reopen, it cannot be a business as usual approach now or possibly

for some foreseeable time. Consumer demand, purchasing habits, and the factors guiding the decisions of many businesses have changed, perhaps for some time, so we must support businesses to adapt and ensure that people have the right skills and opportunities to thrive in these difficult circumstances.

From March this year our economic response and recovery programme initially focused on protecting the economy through insulating business and households from the worst impacts of COVID-19. This included a **package of business support to reflect the specific needs of our economy in light of the crisis** and keep businesses and jobs afloat. This included over £11 million in grants for self-employed people through our Newly Self-Employed Hardship Fund – providing essential aid for those who were ineligible for UK Government support. The fund was part of an almost £160 million package of additional grant support for small and medium sized businesses that was not available elsewhere in the UK.

However, we know the economic impact of COVID-19 and the removal of the job retention scheme will have a devastating effect on employment and jobs. And this will impact most acutely on young people and those who already face barriers to employment such as women, disabled people, and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

The loss of employment, and reliance on insecure work, has a significant toll on household and individual wellbeing. Ultimately, one of the best ways to ensure an individual's wellbeing is to secure a good job, with good conditions. Helping people to do so has always been our goal but it has never been more important.

Transitioning to a sustainable, net zero society by 2045 and restoring Scotland's environment will create a demand for a wide range of jobs with new skills and long term career prospects. Driving forward a green recovery, we will take bold action to increase the number of opportunities for people to be a part of this green revolution, and access new opportunities for jobs, training, and skills development.

The recent reports from both the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery and the Education and Skills Strategic Board have contributed to and concur with our strategic approach to the economy, and the reports from the Climate Emergency Response Group and the Just Transition Commission reinforce the importance of a green recovery.

Our range of employability and skills support includes:

- Significant support for apprenticeships
- A new Youth Guarantee
- A new National Transition Training Fund
- A £100 million Green Jobs Fund
- Funding for employers to access flexible workforce development training opportunities and support inclusive economic growth through up-skilling or re-skilling of employees
- Fair Start Scotland to help those facing the greatest barriers find work
- Our No One Left Behind funding stream aimed at helping those who face challenging barriers to finding and maintaining employment reach their potential
- Support for those affected by redundancy through our Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) initiative, including additional funding to reflect the current increase in people facing or experiencing redundancy
- Investment in Individual Training Accounts
- Funding to support community jobs

Supporting young people

Before the pandemic, we had established a strong track record of tackling youth unemployment through our Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Programme. To address the challenges presented by the pandemic in terms of youth unemployment we will use DYW as the solid foundation to build our response upon.

We will invest **£60 million in a new Youth Guarantee**, targeted at those most in need of support, to help them make the transition into work, education, or training. Every young person aged between 16 and 24 in Scotland will be guaranteed either the opportunity to study at university or college, take part in an apprenticeship programme, take up a job or work experience, or participate in a formal volunteering or training programme according to their own personal circumstances.

Investing £60m to support a new Youth Guarantee



We will publish an implementation plan shortly which will set out how the guarantee will be delivered, bringing together partnerships with private, public and third sector organisations. This will include our commitment to the living wage, and working with universities, colleges, local authorities and others to develop a package of options, such as wage incentives, enhanced key worker support or new education or training opportunities to offer support to more young people, in addition to the KickStart Programme being developed by the UK Government.

To support the youth guarantee, we will **invest up to £10 million in DYW Regional Groups** to support more young people to access the labour market, strengthen their links with employers, and create more opportunities to employ young people. The Scottish Government will show leadership across the public sector to ensure that all our public bodies understand and support the ambitions of the Youth Guarantee, this will include creating increased opportunities for 'green' apprenticeships across public sector bodies.

We are also providing **£10 million funding for up to 8,500 individuals to complete or start an apprenticeship**, including additional funding for the Scottish Government's Adopt an Apprentice programme which provides a financial incentive to businesses to employ an apprentice who has recently been made redundant. Apprenticeships are at the heart of our skills system and we will ensure that they have a strong focus on providing the skills we need to achieve zero net carbon.

£250 Job Start payment for young people starting a new job



We have introduced our new **Job Start Payment**, providing **£250, or £400 for people with children, supporting around 5,000 young people a year starting a new job after a period of unemployment**. In the current crisis, getting a job will represent a massive turning point for many young people – this payment will help ensure it does not also bring financial pressures.

In delivering these ambitions we will build a new relationship with schools, colleges, and employers, to ensure support is directed where it can enable young people to secure new, high quality opportunities, and drive forward our economic and social recovery.

Helping people secure the skills they need for the future

The schemes we have detailed will help young people at risk from the impacts of the pandemic, but as the recovery develops we will see growth opportunities in new sectors, particularly in green growth sectors, that will require new skills and provide retraining opportunities. We will provide a package of support which includes an additional £100 million for people looking for work or those at risk of redundancy as a result of COVID-19.

National Transition Training Fund

to support
10,000 people
facing redundancy
and unemployment



We will **create a £25 million National Transition Training Fund, launching in autumn 2020, to support up to 10,000 people.** This will provide rapid, high-quality and targeted support to people facing redundancy and unemployment in those sectors and regions most exposed to the current economic downturn. Individuals eligible for funding will be in control of their training plan but supported by careers advisors with knowledge of regional job opportunities. The training will be aimed at helping individuals develop the skills required to move into sectors with the greatest potential for future growth and job opportunities. In line with the ambitions of the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan, which is being progressed by Skills Development Scotland and partners, a focus will be the provision of green skills to support Scotland's transition to net zero.

We have **doubled funding for the Flexible Workforce Development Fund to £20 million.**

Under existing eligibility rules we anticipate up to an additional 1,000 apprenticeship levy paying employers could benefit from the expansion of the Fund. This will enable more employers to address priority skills gaps in their organisation by accessing up to £15,000 in funding to create tailored training programmes with their local college, providing the opportunity to upskill and reskill their existing workforce.

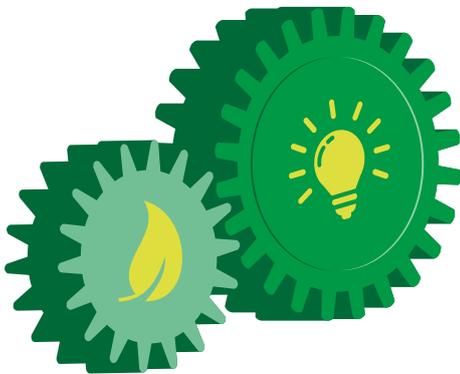
Individual Training Accounts, backed by £3.7 million, are most commonly used to access basic entry-level certificates across a range of sectors. We will work with business, trades unions, and the education and skills sector, to **ensure a more targeted approach to training provision** based on labour market intelligence. We will focus on sectors identified as likely to have skills gaps and job openings, ensuring that funding reflects demand. We will engage employers, schools and colleges to inform this approach, making sure we are developing the right skills.

We have also moved quickly to protect people made redundant by rapidly reviewing our Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) offer, scaling it up and providing £5 million additional funding. PACE offers free advice and is available to all individuals affected by redundancy, no matter the size of the business or number of employees. Since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, it has adapted its delivery model to continue to deliver for those who need support. Since March 2020, 136 companies and 9,137 individuals have received PACE support. This is a significant rise from the same period last year.

Creating Green Jobs

Transitioning to net-zero will require a robust, diversified economy where businesses can make investments with confidence and our enterprise agencies can support the growth of high potential, sustainable and low carbon industries.

£100 million Green Jobs Fund



Over the next five years we will create a £100 million Green Jobs fund, investing alongside businesses and organisations to support new and increased opportunities for green job creation across Scotland. This will invest £50 million through Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, and South of Scotland Enterprise to help businesses which provide sustainable and/or low carbon products and services to develop, grow and create jobs. A further £50 million will be invested to support businesses and supply chains across a range of sectors – such as manufacturing, tech, and land based organisations – to take advantage of public and private investment in low carbon infrastructure, and the transition to a low carbon economy in Scotland and beyond, boosting green employment. Our apprenticeship system and the National Transition Training Fund will in turn support people into the jobs created.

Through the range of low carbon funding set out throughout this Programme for Government, we will invest significantly to secure a just transition to a net zero economy. This will help provide new, green jobs and skills development, and ensure that as we accelerate our transition to net-zero we have the Scottish supply chain, workforce and expertise that we need to maximise the opportunities from that transition in Scotland and globally.

We will **boost youth employment opportunities in nature and land-based jobs** by expanding existing apprenticeship and undergraduate schemes in public agencies. **We will work with Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland and NatureScot to double their existing commitments to provide opportunities for young people within their organisations.** These opportunities will be focused on degree level undergraduates as well as modern apprentices. We will look to extend this approach to other environmental bodies in the public sector and encourage third and private sector employers working in similar fields.

We will develop a Green Workforce and Skills Development package, building on an initial skills gap analysis undertaken by NatureScot on the investment in skills in the natural environment which will be needed in the next decade. Green skills are wide ranging and will be vital to delivering our future ambitions across sectors from nature-based tourism, land and environmental management, forestry, green finance, and low carbon farming. We will work with NatureScot to develop this analysis to **produce an assessment of the nature-based jobs we need for the transition to a net zero economy in Scotland** and how we can develop more nature-based opportunities.

In this economic crisis we must now, more than ever, draw on our assets to propel our recovery. We have one of the best trained workforces in the world, with a global reputation for providing high-skilled employees – supported by first-class schools, colleges and universities. As businesses struggle and people lose their jobs we must build on these strong foundations to help people succeed and get back into work.

Support for families in poverty

We are the only country in the UK to have statutory income-based targets to reduce and eradicate child poverty, but the progress we have seen is now at risk because of the crisis.

As part of meeting this statutory obligation, we are committed to ensuring everyone can access work that is fair and offers flexibility and opportunity for all. Our ability to take the necessary action on this is hindered by the continued reservation of employment law to the UK Parliament, but we will actively **work with employers to expand payment of the real Living Wage**, with the aim of 25,000 additional workers receiving payment. By embedding the principles of fair work across Scotland, we will improve livelihoods and reduce social inequality. This will help some of the most vulnerable groups in Scotland – such as lone parent families and families with disabilities – as well as women, who more often than not are expected to shoulder the main responsibilities of childcare.

We will also ensure Scottish Government resources are targeted as far as is possible at jobs with fair wages, including payment of the living wage as a minimum, and high standards.

Even before the crisis, access to good-quality, fair work was particularly important for those most at risk of poverty. We will make an **additional £2.35 million** available for our Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF) in 2020-21, which already provides intensive person-centered employability support for parents in and out of work. The new funding, which brings total in year investment in PESF to £7.35 million, will enhance local delivery of targeted key worker support for young and disabled parents – both groups who face particular challenges in finding and securing employment – and improve the alignment of PESF with Early Learning and Childcare. As a whole, PESF is expected to support 17,500 low income parents to access or progress in work, helping them to increase their income from employment and lift them and their family out of poverty.

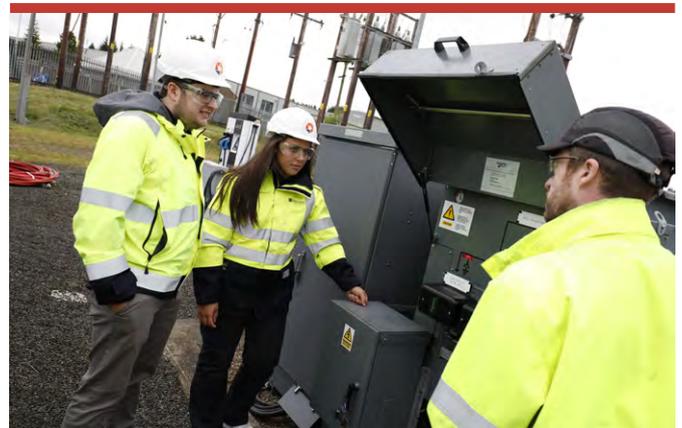
We will also **extend Fair Start Scotland services for a further two years** to March 2023, providing support for unemployed disabled people, and people with health conditions and other barriers to moving into fair and sustained work.

No One Left Behind

Our No One Left Behind agenda aims to support those who face the biggest barriers to employment. Working collaboratively with Local Government, Third Sector and other partners to deliver our shared ambition for a more responsive, joined up and aligned employability system in Scotland has never been more important. Our overall investment in employability, including the Youth Guarantee, will have a particular focus on helping those most adversely affected during the health and economic crisis – young people, disabled people, minority ethnic communities, and lone parents. Over the next year we will work with partners to co-design and implement a Shared Measurement Framework, setting out a consistent way of collecting and reporting data within employability services. This will ensure that the right information is available across the system to drive learning and improvement. Partnership is key to our approach. We will also co-design a Customer Charter setting clear expectations on how people will be treated when accessing employability support, and a National Standards Guarantee to balance the need for local flexibility with national coherence.

The pandemic has highlighted even more starkly the existing disparity in employment for workers from a minority ethnic background. It has highlighted the additional challenges faced by minority ethnic workers who are over-represented in jobs with increased exposure risks to COVID-19 and/or who are over-represented in work that is not secure and who have seen that work stopped. We will publish, in September, **a recruitment toolkit designed to support employers in recruiting more people from minority ethnic backgrounds** as part of our efforts to improve outcomes for minority ethnic people moving into, staying in and progressing in employment.

The pandemic has also had a disproportionate impact on women's jobs and incomes. Women have made up the majority of the workforce in many 'shut down' sectors, and in our care sector, as well as undertaking additional unpaid caring responsibilities. The vast majority of lone parents are women. All of this has made them more exposed to the impacts of earnings reductions or losses. Evidence highlights the potential damage the pandemic could do to women's employment and career opportunities longer term and the potential to increase both the gender employment gap and the gender pay gap in coming years. We will **review the actions within our Fairer Scotland for Women: Gender Pay Gap Action Plan** to ensure the actions are fit for purpose and will effectively support our economic recovery through the pandemic and beyond.



Workplace Transformation

The world of work in Scotland has undergone some radical changes during the lockdown period to prevent transmission of COVID-19 and many businesses and employees will want to capture perceived improvements, whilst also resolving challenges involved in the new ways of working.

We will support flexible work experts TimeWise to develop and sustain a fair, flexible work programme for Scotland by the end of March 2021, as they deliver high-quality support to help 300 employers adapt to flexible working through COVID-19 and beyond. Timewise will also support the recruitment of 40 employer-facing employability advisors who will help a further 1,000 employers and 1,000 individuals to implement and benefit from fair and flexible work opportunities. Groups such as low income parents, carers and parents with disabled children, as well as older workers, and those with health issues, will access support from 'fair flex' trained advisors which will ultimately reduce the inequalities they experience on a daily basis. We will analyse the availability of flexible work opportunities before, during and after the pandemic and use this data to ensure that these opportunities are available for workers across all regions and sectors in Scotland.

As recommended by the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, **we will assess the scope for establishing a new centre for workplace transformation**. Helping businesses and organisations to become more inclusive as we emerge out of recession into recovery and renewal will be a priority. Work is already underway to understand what we can learn from successful businesses, international leadership approaches and innovative thinkers so that such a centre can have a significant impact on Scottish business performance, productivity, innovation, Fair Work, workforce resilience and worker wellbeing.

The effects of COVID-19 have made many businesses and people rethink the concept of where and how work takes place. For many, working in large, centralised offices is not the current norm, and may not be again. For many home-working from the kitchen table or spare room is not a long-term solution. Local work hubs formed by repurposing existing buildings, or by developing new 'pop-up' communities, have the potential to create quiet, safe, hygienic and connected work environments, offering greater choice, flexibility and security for people to work locally and for companies to create productive work environments for a distributed workforce. As part of the **Work Local Challenge Programme** we will work with partners on innovation and deployment of local work hubs and office space solutions to enhance workplace choices. We will engage with the business community to enhance the choices available to work more locally and flexibly. As part of this we will undertake analysis to understand the economic, social, environmental, well-being and inclusivity impacts that a shift to remote working might have, and use this to identify the scope for a more enduring shift toward local, near home and remote working.

We are expanding the **Productivity Club Pilots**, in collaboration with the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI), establishing three new pilots in North-East Scotland, the Highlands, and the South of Scotland, alongside continued development of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Pilots which already have 1,000 members since launching in autumn 2019. These provide networks of businesses focused on doing things better. Through collaboration and peer-to-peer learning, sharing advice, experiences and knowledge they help businesses boost productivity, drive innovation and create sustainable economic growth.

As part of any learning from and response to the crisis, **we must ensure we recognise the specific determinants of poverty and inequality, and the role for business to provide targeted support for key groups.** There is a risk that those who may have more limited capacity for work – and are therefore at greater risk of poverty – may be left behind, whether because they have health concerns around a return to a physical workplace, are unable to access the necessary childcare, or find their social care or informal support can no longer meet their needs, particularly for older or disabled workers. Equality and human rights will be at the heart of our approach and we will work with stakeholders, businesses, and others to include considerations of future workplace adjustments, flexible working, and support for those with caring responsibilities in any future work on workplace transformation, providing better employment opportunities for all.

Boosting our digital capabilities

Digital infrastructure and our information and communications sector have been central to our economic and societal resilience throughout this crisis. Many businesses have been able to mitigate some of the impact of the global pandemic through the use of digital technology or by quickly adopting digital technology. This acceleration in digital adoption has protected health, delivered learning, and for many people it has totally reshaped the way we think about work.

However, we know that many businesses and households struggle to keep pace with the accelerated rate of digitalisation, and many may be reluctant to invest in technology at a time of economic uncertainty. Our task is to ensure they can invest and embrace digital technology confidently, and we will work with all sectors to articulate the benefits, and unlock opportunities.

We want to increase Scotland's digital confidence because we know that access to digital tools can boost business productivity and people's wellbeing by enabling them to access vital public and private services.



Our response, set out below, is fourfold. We will:

- take steps to intensify and grow the contribution of our tech sector and **create a world-class tech ecosystem**
- help every business get online with new **digital adoption** support and **acceleration of our own digital adoption**
- take steps to **end digital exclusion** so that poverty is not a barrier to accessing digital, and
- drive up **connectivity** across Scotland.

Creating a world-class tech ecosystem

We want to drive growth in some of our most promising economic sectors such as software, fintech and data driven businesses. These industries are not only an exciting part of Scotland's economic future with strong potential to create high value jobs – they are also catalysing innovation in our more traditional industries. In fact, the distinction between the tech sector and traditional sectors is to some extent artificial – some of our fastest growing 'tech' companies are built around igniting innovation within traditional sectors like finance, healthcare and tourism. Eventually they will all become part of 'mainstream' economic activity.

Creating a hotbed of activity around tech innovation is central to driving innovation and investment in our economic future. That is why we commissioned Mark Logan, former Skyscanner COO, to undertake an independent review of the Scottish tech ecosystem with the aim of identifying actions required to raise our tech sector to world-class status. Mr Logan recently published his conclusions centering on an ambitious strategy to establish Scotland as a leading startup nation with recommendations spanning education, entrepreneurship, attraction of executive-level talent and investment. The Review has been endorsed by key figures across business, technology and academia as potentially transformational.

The Scottish Government will back this strategy and commits to **establishing a national network of 'Tech Scalars'** – world-class startup incubators delivering the best available mentoring and training for our company founders. We aim to have five operational scalars by end 2021/22 and aim to create between 300-500 high-quality new startups over 5 years.

We will aim to create a part public, part privately funded **Ecosystem Fund that will make strategic investments in the organisations and activities that support our startups to succeed.** Examples include investing in key tech conferences, the creation of new startups, and extracurricular support to develop the next generation of tech talent.

We need to provide reskilling opportunities for people whose employment was impacted by COVID-19 and need support to transition to new digital careers – where there are still significant skills gaps. We will leverage the National Transition Training Fund wherever possible to encourage more people to take advantage of the digital skills training opportunities that we already have in Scotland.

We will work in partnership with the technology industry to develop and drive progress on recommendations around education, entrepreneurship and investment.

In recognising the enhanced role for technology in government and public services, we will extend the internationally renowned CivTech programme, building further on the existing programme and expanding its role at the heart of an international alliance of similar organisations that are stimulating innovation in the government tech sector.



Digital Adoption

Businesses that have coped best during the pandemic are invariably those who have been able to adapt with the help of digital tools: pivoting quickly to homeworking, adopting cloud computing for speed and collaborative working, using new digital platforms to access customers and to repurpose or diversify products and services. Scotland's SME base, however, needs support to adopt digital technologies, with many still lacking basic capability and fewer still using more sophisticated technologies. On a practical level, inability to innovate could severely limit the impact of any increased investment in digital infrastructure. More positively, there is compelling economic evidence that the adoption of digital technologies supports growth, productivity, economic inclusion, regional income equality and the creation of high value jobs.

In response, in August **we provided an additional £1.5 million to nearly triple the capacity of the DigitalBoost programme for the rest of the financial year**, to £2.3 million. This programme provides expert advice, capacity-building, and coaching tailored to the specific digital needs of businesses. It will support those businesses to learn not just about how to adopt productivity enhancing digital technologies, but also to invest in skills to deliver successful implementation and to keep pace with future technological progress.

The Scottish Government will also put digital at the heart of our own services, building on the positive changes we have seen in areas like healthcare digital adoption, and we will boost digital capability. We will shortly **update Scotland's Digital Action Plan**, in conjunction with Local Government, setting out actions to ensure that we build upon this experience to deliver sustainable social, economic and environmental change. This will **accelerate the transformation of key digital public services** and the development of common digital platforms and components that improve quality, support cross-organisational working and enable resources to be redirected to front line, local delivery.

We will invest in modern, efficient shared services within Scottish Government, introduce new controls to ensure best value and develop the skills needed to realise the benefits of digital technology and data science. We will drive forward digitalisation of planning as a key public service. We want this to transform the planning system by making it much more inclusive, efficient and- through collaboration and opening up data-, a vital enabler in economic and societal recovery. This will enable local people to play a more active role in the development and re-imagining of their places and create greater opportunities to influence positive change. For business and industry this will create greater certainty and help attract and target investment more effectively. We will **publish a Digital Strategy for Planning in November** this year, setting a long-term vision and direction, followed by the launch of an ambitious five-year digital transformation programme in early 2021. This programme will also support jobs. Initial estimates suggest 1,600 jobs over 10 years in the construction and development sectors will be created with more detail to be set out in the Strategy.

We are also determined to ensure that new digital services are designed to be inclusive and operate to high ethical standards which will protect personal privacy. The Scottish Approach to Service Design ensures that users are consulted when design decision are made. We are **supporting a programme to fund a consortia of organisations (geographically spread around Scotland) to develop pathways of training in cyber security**, specially designed for neurodivergent people, from engagement, through training and into employment. And we are **funding a programme led by Skills Development Scotland to broadcast interactive sessions to young people in schools and at home**, enabling them to hear from, and receive learning input from, cyber security industry experts in order to encourage them to consider learning and careers in cyber security.

Cyber security is the critical underpinning factor that will ensure Scotland is safely and securely able to develop smart digital solutions to meet the needs of the immediate and long-term economic future. The cyber security industry can play an important part in the economic recovery of Scotland and it is important that we are able to meet the demand for cyber security professionals, through meeting skills shortages.

Digital inclusion

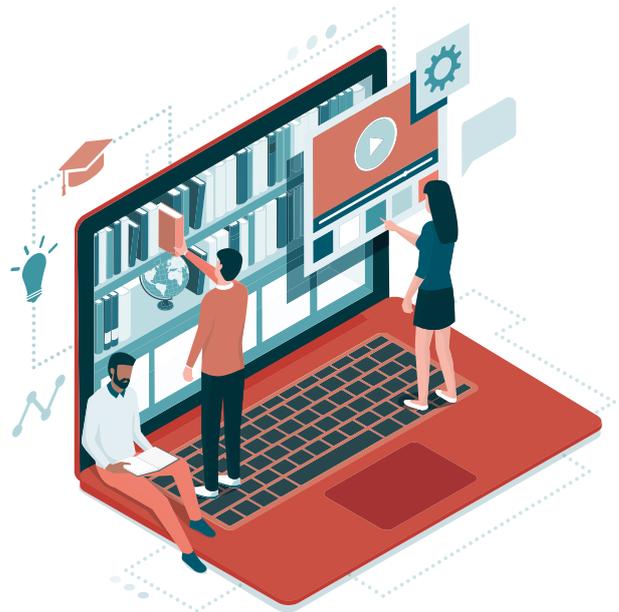
The urgent need for increased digital inclusion has been thrown into sharp relief by the pandemic, which has accelerated digital adoption by many, whilst compounding the digital divide for others. Closing that divide is a clear example of where economic and social imperatives align – being connected is now a vital part of our quality of life as well as key to securing employment.

Closing that gap now rests not only on the quality of Scotland's digital infrastructure, but on the ability of people to be able to afford data and devices, and acquire the skills and confidence to exploit the benefits and opportunities of being digitally connected.

We are doing that through Connecting Scotland, a Scottish Government programme set up in response to COVID-19 which, in collaboration with Local Government and the Third Sector, provides iPads, Chromebooks, free data and support to develop digital skills and confidence online for people who are digitally excluded due to low incomes. In its initial phase, we committed £20 million to support people who were at risk of isolation due to COVID-19 because they were in the highest clinical risk group group ('shielding') or the higher risk of severe illness group, and we have subsequently moved on to work with low income households with children, and young people leaving care, as part of our child poverty approach.

Building on these successes, **we are now committing an additional £23 million to help even more digitally excluded people and households with a digital and data safety net**, providing them with a device and extending our previous offer of unlimited data and support and training from one year to two for everyone the programme has helped. This will bring the total number of people we have helped to get confidently online up to 50,000 by the end of 2021.

Connecting Scotland will help bring 50,000 people online



Digital connectivity

To deliver our ambitions for digital innovation, and ensure a digitally inclusive society, requires Scotland being fully digitally connected. Our Reaching 100% (R100) programme will ensure every premises in Scotland can access superfast broadband. It will extend full-fibre broadband to much of rural Scotland, going beyond our original commitment, and helping to deliver future-proofed economic, social and environmental benefits for the whole country. Our 100% commitment will be delivered through a combination of the R100 contracts, our Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme and commercial coverage.

Work on the south of Scotland contract began in summer 2020 where we will provide over 99% of the 21,000 eligible premises for R100 with access to a full-fibre solution, leaving in the region of just two hundred premises in this area requiring to be connected by our voucher scheme. Work on the central lot has now also begun, and of 36,500 eligible premises, the contract we have signed with BT – alongside greater than anticipated commercial build – will reach around 88% of them. It is expected that the majority of the contract build in central and the south of Scotland will be completed by the end of 2023.

We have always recognised that the contracts – in which we plan to invest almost £49 million in 2021/22 alone – would not solely deliver our commitment. That is why we developed the Scottish Broadband Vouchers Scheme (SBVS) **which will provide grants to broadband customers**, to support access to a range of technologies and suppliers and helping to ensure our commitment that everyone can access superfast broadband by the end of 2021 is achieved. We have **launched an online checker** which allows people to examine at a premises level what the R100 programme will deliver for them and by when.

This investment will help deliver social, economic and environmental benefits for all of Scotland, not least as part of our economic and social recovery – enabling innovation and the creation of highly skilled jobs; opening up remote working, social and leisure opportunities; delivering digital health and other new public services; and reducing travel, including the need to commute. It will also help improve Scotland's mobile connectivity – providing the backhaul needed to support the growth of 4G and 5G services.

We will continue to improve mobile coverage across Scotland through delivery of 4G infrastructure and services through the Scottish 4G Infill programme. This is backed by £15 million of Scottish Government funding and £10 million from the European Regional Development Fund, addressing 40 of Scotland's mobile 'notspots' – areas with no mobile coverage. Through the Scotland 5G Centre, we are also establishing local Innovation Hubs across Scotland with access to a 5G Testbed, providing focal points for digital learning and the continued development of this technology.

The public sector, with a significant estate, has a key role to play in enabling the development and rollout of the largescale infrastructure needed for 4G, 5G and other telecoms. Before the end of 2020 we will publish rental guidance and standardised documentation to enable those companies to access Scottish Government estate to site infrastructure. We are also committed to exploring the feasibility of how collateral connectivity benefits to trackside communities could be realised as part of our wider considerations on rail network connectivity enhancements.

Investing in a net-zero economy – building momentum

Scotland was one of the first countries in the world to declare a global climate emergency, and in the year since that declaration we have taken significant action to tackle that emergency head on. Last year, the recently-established Climate Emergency Response Group showed us the sort of collaboration required, with the Programme for Government setting out clearly how we would respond. We have delivered against all of our commitments, and now we will adapt and scale up our response, ensuring a green recovery is at the heart of economic recovery.

Last year, we set out a Green New Deal to rethink the investments we make, and how we make them. This deal has now been expanded and enhanced to form the basis of our commitment to a Green recovery.

The Deal leveraged the power of public and private sector investment, targeted at the right projects to create and sustain quality jobs. At its heart was harnessing the power of the Scottish National Investment Bank, and launching our £3 billion Green Investment Portfolio. We will also introduce a Green Growth Accelerator to attract green finance to Scotland. While this joint working has been impacted by the need for partners to focus on the immediate response to COVID-19, we are continuing to make progress.

This year we are building on this momentum, ramping up multi-year investments to send a clear signal to supply chains to prepare to help us deliver the net zero transition, including by investing in the people needed to deliver this significant economic change. This includes setting out how we plan to invest the first tranche of our £2 billion Low Carbon Fund, **allocating £100 million in our Green Jobs Fund** to boost opportunities in this area, and **investing a transformative £1.6 billion** over the next parliament to set us on a path to eliminating emissions from heating buildings.

Our statutory Climate Change Plan sets out a clear pathway of policies that deliver and drive the investment, jobs and skills required to transition to net-zero. The Climate Change Plan that we published in early 2018, was due to be updated in April 2020, but was necessarily postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic – it will now be published before the end of 2020, to incorporate green recovery proposals. This will be accompanied by a new public engagement strategy.

Our Infrastructure Investment Plan, will be published in September, providing the strategic framework for the next five years' pipeline of projects and programmes – **with expected value of around £32 billion over five years**. This investment will be targeted to boost inclusive economic growth, build sustainable places, and increase delivery of our climate and environmental ambitions.

Our Capital Spending Review, to be published at the end of this year, will further reinforce our momentum on building certainty, supporting supply chains and creating the conditions for a fair and green economy.

As we move into economic recovery, it is vital that we support Scottish businesses to decarbonise to ensure that recovery is green.

Themes	Action to date	2020-21 PfG announcements
<p>Supporting local economies and community wealth building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ £500 million for bus priority infrastructure over the next five years ■ £17 million Low Carbon Transport Loan scheme ■ £2.5 million LEZs Support Fund ■ £2 million to take ideas for sustainable and zero carbon mobility to fully-formed propositions suitable for large scale investments ■ £83 million in our Future Transport Fund ■ Increase active travel investment in 2020/21 to over £100 million ■ £35 million Low Carbon transport loan fund ■ £5 million low carbon rail investment ■ Continued £10 million support of Climate Challenge Fund ■ Consult on ambition for zero or ultra-low emission city centres by 2030 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New funding of over £500 million over five years for active travel infrastructure, access to bikes and behaviour change schemes ■ Take forward our ambitions for 20 minute neighbourhoods – the creation of liveable, accessible places, with thriving local economies, where people can meet their daily needs within a 20 minute walk ■ Identify vacant and derelict sites for green infrastructure initiatives ■ £2 million Islands Green Recovery Programme ■ Updated Digital Action Plan and continued work on R100 programme ■ Introduce a network of regional hubs to empower communities to develop local solutions to making the transition to net-zero and climate resilient living ■ Develop a network of Climate Action Towns ■ Invest £4 million in 2021 in a zero emission drivetrain testing facility ■ Establish a zero emission heavy duty vehicle programme with a minimum investment of £1 million

Themes	Action to date	2020-21 PfG announcements
Transforming Heat and Energy Efficiency in our homes and buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Launched the Heat Transition Deal, including £20 million to decarbonise heating in social housing, £2 million capital investment for remote and off grid communities through our flagship CARES programmes and targeted support to enable affordable housing to meet zero carbon housing standards ■ Additional funding for domestic energy efficiency, bringing total spending in 2020-21 to £162 million ■ On track to deliver of £30 million in renewable heat projects ■ By the end of 2021, we will have allocated over £1 billion since 2009 to tackling fuel poverty and improving energy efficiency. ■ The Scottish Government's total investment in domestic energy efficiency from 2013/14 to 2018/19 was £636m. These schemes have helped over 150,000 households throughout Scotland to benefit from energy efficiency measures. Over the lifetime of the measures installed, these Scottish households will cumulatively save over £854 million on fuel bills and reduce emissions by over 3.4 million tonnes of CO2 ■ Created steering group of experts from construction, housing and commercial property sectors to advise on introduction of new standard to require new buildings consented from 2024 to use renewable or zero emissions heating ■ Develop a Fuel Poverty Strategy in 2020 to be published in 2021 with a target date of 2040 to tackle the root causes of fuel poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Over the next Parliament we will invest nearly £1.6 billion in transforming our buildings to ensure that emissions from heating are eliminated by 2040 to remove poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. The deal uplifts Heat and Energy efficiency spend from £112m in 2019/20 to £398m p.a. in 2025-26 and will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At least £95 million to decarbonise the public sector estate ○ Opening the £50 million Green Recovery Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (LCITP) ○ Up to £50 million to invest in significant energy efficiency improvements to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh ○ £25 million for zero carbon energy infrastructure and heat networks for residential and commercial premises along the river Clyde's path ○ Additional £55 million to support scale up of energy efficiency programmes ■ Set out our vision and route map for transforming the way we heat Scotland's buildings by publishing a draft Heat Policy Statement and refresh the Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map alongside the updated Climate Change Plan, to set out a clear pathway towards zero emissions from heat in buildings ■ Establish an expert group to make recommendations to Scottish Ministers on the scope of a potential heat pump sector deal ■ Launch a scoping consultation in autumn 2020 on standards for new buildings requiring them to use renewable or zero emission heating from 2024

Themes	Action to date	2020-21 PfG announcements
<p>Transitioning industrial, manufacturing and energy sectors to net-zero</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ £10 million funding for Hydrogen pilot schemes ■ Additional £10 million funding for Wave Energy Scotland ■ Energy Statement to set out the extent to which renewable and low-carbon energy will need to combine to meet net-zero ■ Commitment to decarbonise scheduled flights within Scotland by 2040 and decarbonise Scotland’s passenger rail service by 2035 ■ Scottish Water to become a zero carbon user of electricity by 2040 ■ Decarbonise public sector fleet by 2025 ■ New Electric Vehicle funding of £5 million to support transition to decarbonised police fleet ■ Infrastructure Commission will bring a low or zero carbon focus to all our future infrastructure investments ■ Develop the 4th National Planning Framework aimed at radically accelerating emissions reduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New £100 million Green Jobs fund, investing alongside a range of sectors – such as manufacturing, tech, and land based organisations – to support new and increased opportunities for green job creation across Scotland ■ £60 million to support decarbonisation of industrial and manufacturing sectors including the £34 million Scottish Industrial Energy Transformation Fund and the £26 million Low Carbon Manufacturing Challenge Fund ■ Establish a Grangemouth Future Industry Board ■ Continue to support and invest in the development of CCUS projects in Scotland and commission a suite of research projects for CCUS ■ Develop a Carbon Capture and Utilisation Challenge Fund ■ Publish a refreshed Energy Strategy ■ £6.9 million of funding for SGN’s H100 project using green hydrogen to heat homes ■ Deliver a Hydrogen Policy Statement and Hydrogen Action Plan as a companion to the Climate Change Plan Update

Themes	Action to date	2020-21 PfG announcements
Skills and training for Green Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Produce and publish Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan ■ Support a new ‘Climate Solutions’ course and qualification for public and private sector leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ £60 million Youth Guarantee including increased opportunities for ‘green’ apprenticeships across public sector bodies ■ A £25 million National Transition Training Fund aimed at bridging the skills gap between those facing unemployment and sectors with greatest potential for future growth, including focus on provision of green skills in areas of immediate demand like heat and energy efficiency ■ Boost youth employment opportunities and target future skills and capacity requirements in nature and land-based jobs by expanding existing apprenticeship and undergraduate schemes in public agencies – including Scottish Forestry and Forestry and Land Scotland to double their existing commitments to provide opportunities for young people ■ Develop a Green Workforce and Skills Development Package with an initial skills gap analysis undertaken by NatureScot ■ Publish the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan
Investing in our resilience to climate change and future pandemics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continue to provide £42 million annually to local authorities for flood protection and increased funding for the Flood Resilience Forum to £189,000 in 2019-20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Extra £150 million for flood risk management in addition to continuing to provide £42 million annually to local authorities ■ £12 million in coastal change adaptation ■ Create a Supply Chains Development Programme across key sectors of the economy, including where we see genuine sustainable economic potential or resilience for future pandemic waves.

Themes	Action to date	2020-21 PfG announcements
<p>Investing for a Green Recovery and mobilising private finance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ £230 million “return to work” includes Green recovery package of £66 million ■ A three-part digital investment package, totalling £35.5 million ■ Committed almost £40 million for local authorities to spend on ‘pop-up’ cycle lands and wider pavements ■ £62 million Energy Transition Fund ■ Green Investment Portfolio to identify £3 billion of projects ready for green finance investment ■ committed to invest £220 million of fresh seed funding in 2020/21 as part of the £2 billion capitalisation pledge to establish SNIB ■ Mobilise £12.6 billion public procurement ■ Green Growth Accelerator £1 million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Committed an additional £2 billion of infrastructure investment over the next parliamentary session to stimulate demand and create jobs in the transition to net zero ■ The Scottish National Investment Bank is on track to open this year ■ Will launch the £3 billion Green Investment Portfolio ■ Continued commitment to developing and launching Green Growth Accelerators ■ Attract global investment by signalling our intent to be ambitious, create first mover advantage and a clear, stable and long term commitment to net zero ■ We will develop tools and guidance to support a green recovery and our wider climate and circular economy ambitions through procurement

Themes	Action to date	2020-21 PfG announcements
Scotland's land and natural economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ £20 million for peatland restoration in 2020-21 with a commitment to invest more than £250 million over 10 years ■ Expand investment in forestry by £6 million in 2020/21 to over £64 million ■ Commitment to plant an additional 12,000 hectares of forest supported by an additional £5 million investment ■ £40 million investment in the Agricultural Transformation Programme ■ Increase funding for Biodiversity Challenge Fund to £5 million ■ Commitment to establish a new virtual centre to co-ordinate marine climate change science and research in response to the global climate emergency ■ Make use of Regional Land Use Partnerships from 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Additional £100 million to Scottish Forestry to increase new planting alongside £30 million to Forestry and Land Scotland to expand Scotland's national forests and land by an additional 18,000 Ha per year by 2024. A further £20 million will go to further increase nursery stocks ■ Committed to significantly increasing the rate of peatland restoration ■ Continue to support biodiversity, including £3 million for the Biodiversity Challenge Fund in 2021-22 alongside high-level statement of intent on biodiversity before the end of the year ■ Pilot mini-forests to trial innovative approach to restoring biodiversity ■ Continuing to develop Agricultural Transformation Programme utilising the Agricultural Transformation Fund, including a capital grant scheme ■ £70 million fund to improve local authority refuse collection infrastructure and develop a new route map to reduce waste and meet our waste and recycling targets for 2025 ■ Introduce legislation to increase the carrier bag minimum charge from 5p to 10p ■ Continued funding for the Scottish Land Fund providing £10 million per year to help communities purchase assets ■ We will bring forward recommendations for new mechanisms of agricultural support that secure a productive sector better able to contribute towards delivering Scotland's world-leading climate-change outcomes and promote fresh employment opportunities.

Infrastructure and capital investment – driving our net zero transition

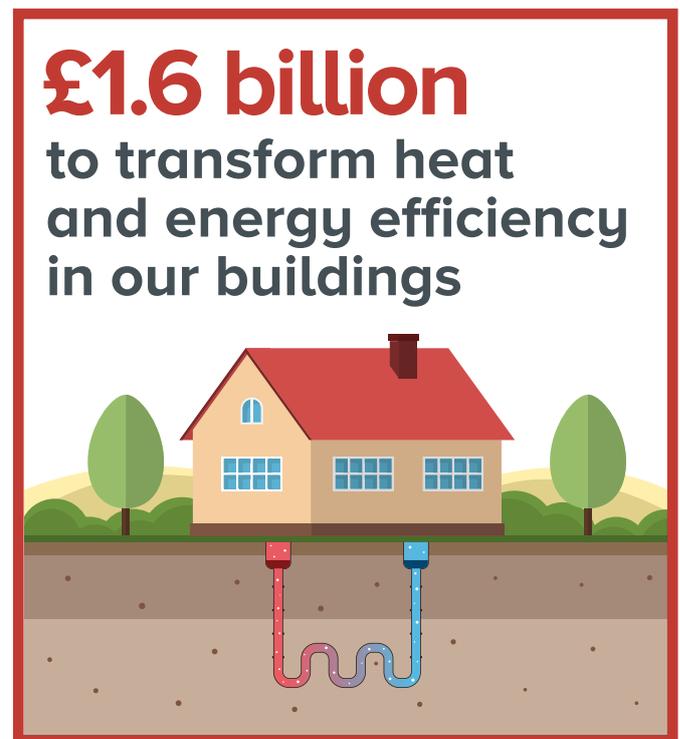
Infrastructure investment is one of the strongest levers available to deliver economic wellbeing, good jobs and growth. We have already committed to the most ambitious long-term level of infrastructure spend ever in Scotland and our National Infrastructure Mission will **steadily increase Scotland's annual infrastructure investment until it is £1.5 billion higher by the end of the next Parliament than it was in 2019-20.**

We are also on track for the Scottish National Investment Bank to open this year. It will be uniquely positioned to influence and shape the direction of Scotland's economic recovery. The economic impacts of COVID-19 reinforce the need for the Bank and for mission-oriented investment. We will **capitalise the Bank with £2 billion over 10 years**, to deliver its primary mission of supporting the transition to net zero carbon emissions. Other missions expected to be set for the Bank focus on investing in places to create opportunities, tackling inequalities, and supporting innovation in response to demographic challenges. Investing across these missions will help deliver a wellbeing economy for Scotland, and build greater resilience and international competitiveness in the face of future potential economic shocks. **The Bank will hold to the principles of equality, transparency, diversity and inclusion.**

We have also already **committed an additional £2 billion of low carbon infrastructure investment over the next parliamentary session.** This Programme for Government details the first the first tranche of this, providing a multi-year commitment to funding for heat and energy efficiency, reprioritising road space for public transport use and decarbonising industry, including manufacturing.

We are investing £1.6 billion to transform our heat and energy efficiency programmes

We believe a sustained, long-term approach to investment in heat and energy efficiency will create and protect good and green jobs, strengthen supply chains, deliver new skills, boost household incomes and reduce fuel poverty. That is why we are now setting out a significant package of investment designed to transform how we heat our homes and buildings.



Currently over 86% of domestic buildings use fossil fuels for their heating, and over 50% of non-domestic buildings use fossil fuels. In order to achieve Scotland's net-zero emission targets, emissions from space and water heating need to be effectively eliminated by 2040-45. This will require action to continue to reduce demand for heat in homes and buildings through energy efficiency measures, and replacing fossil fuel heating systems with renewable or zero emissions sources.

Current rates of deployment need to rapidly increase, and significant and sustained government intervention is required to accelerate the transition away from natural gas and oil based heating systems to renewable or zero emissions alternatives. We will grow our overall capital investment on heat and energy efficiency year-on-year so that from April 2021 and over the next Parliament we will **invest an additional £1.6 billion in transforming our homes and buildings**, setting us on a clear path to eliminate emissions from heating by 2040-2045 and removing poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. We will do this by guaranteeing our existing capital commitments in heat and energy efficiency for the life of the next Parliament – a multi-year certainty of over £900 million – together with a further £425m, bringing our total capital spend on those existing programmes to over £1.3bn. To accelerate our transition to net-zero we will also provide additional capital investment to wider heat and energy efficiency, low carbon, and renewable programmes, with funding of £225 million for specific projects detailed in this section. These funding increases will **more than double our annual capital investment investment in heat and energy efficiency by the end of the next Parliament**, from £112m in 2019/20 to £398m in 2025/26. Improved energy efficiency brings with it long-lasting positive outcomes for the people who benefit, not least older people, through warmer, easier-to-heat homes, improving health and quality of life.

Our ambition is – as a minimum – to see the rate of renewable heat installations in new and existing homes and buildings **double every year from a current baseline of 2,000 domestic installations per annum in 2020 to 64,000 homes fitted in 2025 – a cumulative total of around 126,000 homes**. This pace will enable the sector to continue to maintain high levels of quality assurance for consumers, and see installers recruited and

re-skilled, toward an expected peak installation rate of 250,000 homes per annum in the 2030s. This expansion in installation sends a clear signal that the rate of growth needs to be the maximum possible, building the renewable heat supply chain from its current baseline. Our heat and energy efficiency programmes will include a range of schemes to support that ambition, in addition to the support already available through the Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme, District Heating Loan Fund, Warmer Homes Scotland, Area-Based Schemes and our non-domestic programme. This support will provide a mix of grant funding and loans to help businesses and homes across Scotland.

Our investment package will create jobs related to renewable heat and energy efficiency – we expect this to be at least 3,000 jobs supported in the first year of the programme, growing to at least 5,000 in the final year (2025-26). Beyond that we expect the market, and related jobs, to continue growing. Investment in Heat and Energy Efficiency is, therefore, a critical part of our green recovery and our Green New Deal for Scotland.

We will start by **opening a new funding call of the £50 million Green Recovery Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (LCITP)** in September to support low carbon and renewable heat projects in Scotland. This is a capital funding call seeking projects with a broad low carbon infrastructure focus on heat decarbonisation, smart energy systems, local energy systems and demonstrator projects. This funding is available to business, community projects and local authorities and the LCITP has supported a number of successful projects in recent years, including the installation of a new £6 million low carbon district heating system in Stirling. This system uses cutting edge renewable technologies to harness energy from waste water, delivering low carbon heat and energy to a number of public buildings in Stirling.

As part of our £1.6 billion investment we will provide **at least £95 million to support the decarbonisation of the public sector estate, up to £50 million** to invest in significant energy efficiency improvements to the **Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh** and £25 million to support pioneering heat network projects on the River Clyde as part of our Mission Clyde.

This investment in the Clyde is part of our work on the Mission Clyde and a good example of our commitment to put 'place' at the heart of economic and green recovery. We are committed to making the Clyde an engine of sustainable, inclusive economic growth for the city, the region and Scotland. Parts of the region suffer disproportionately from deprivation, and are now suffering disproportionately from the impacts of COVID-19. We have already committed **£10 million of funding for Mission Clyde projects this financial year and we are committing a further £25 million** to support zero carbon energy infrastructure and heat networks for residential and commercial premises along the river's path.

These discrete projects are important examples of the varying challenges of decarbonising heat in buildings and the scale of investment required. They also demonstrate how decarbonising our buildings can have multiple cross-benefits – from securing a sustainable future for a beloved biodiversity leader and tourist destination to demonstrating the potential for our natural assets to change the way we source our heating.

We were due to publish a Heat Policy Statement and updated Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map in June this year, but this had to be delayed due to COVID-19. We will **publish a draft Heat Policy Statement and refresh the Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map** by the end of this year, setting out our vision and route map for transforming the way we heat Scotland's buildings on a clear pathway towards zero emissions.

We will also **establish an expert group to make recommendations to Scottish Ministers** on the scope of a potential heat pump sector deal for Scotland. This group will be established by October and will be tasked with providing an interim report in March and final recommendations before Summer recess.

We will explore the use of statutory mechanisms to ensure existing buildings meet the energy efficient standards we need, and **we will launch a consultation on standards for new buildings requiring them to use renewable or zero emission heat** from 2024. We will begin work to put in place the necessary regulatory measures needed to drive the transition away from polluting fossil fuel based heating systems in existing buildings. These measures will be set out in the Heat Policy Statement and updated Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map due for publication later in 2020.

We must ensure we adapt our response to meet our twin objectives of reducing both fuel poverty and emissions from heat. In line with the recommendations from the Just Transition Commission, we will **continue to build on the successful Energy Efficient Scotland delivery programmes, which have focused on the aim of removing energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty**. We will provide more 'whole house' retrofits to more fuel poor households, replacing fossil fuel heating and improving insulation to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions.

Taken together, this package of investment provides the foundations for a transformation of how we heat our homes and buildings. We are creating the policy conditions, supported by substantial, long-term investment, that will provide confidence to our people, businesses and investors to commit as well.

Attracting private investment to Scotland

With around £300 trillion of global capital flows, we know that the market for green finance is burgeoning, and Scotland's natural assets and reputation for innovation make it a highly attractive place for that investment. We will launch a £3 billion Green Investment Portfolio – a package of investable propositions we can take to global investors to secure investment into Scotland. This supports our ethical finance ambitions by matching projects which are reducing emissions with investors so we can fully maximise their potential and promote them globally. We will now launch the first round of projects in September 2020. The value of investment opportunities to projects and companies within this initial portfolio will be £1.16 billion, covering a range of different sectors across Scotland from environmentally sustainable commercial real estate to low emission transportation and green energy.

Decarbonising Scotland

We have already taken significant action to tackle the greatest contributors to carbon emissions, including through our Transport Mission Zero work to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles. We have made an extra £26 million available through our Low Carbon Transport Loan Fund to support Scottish households and business in purchasing ultra-low emission vehicles. This year we are expanding it to include used electric vehicles, removing more upfront costs for people, and increasing the accessibility of the scheme for lower income households.

We will invest £60 million, to support the industrial and manufacturing sectors during a green economic recovery to overcome private sector investment and transition challenges.

This will be done through the £34 million Scottish Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, supporting the industrial and manufacturing sectors to fund investment-ready energy efficiency technologies and deeper decarbonisation studies, and the £26 million Low Carbon Manufacturing Challenge Fund, to support innovation in low carbon technology, processes and infrastructure.

We will provide further details on this as part of our Climate Change Plan update.

By maximising the contribution of manufacturing industries we can make stronger progress towards net zero while also creating opportunities to innovate and create new jobs. Such innovation will be supported by our investment of £75 million in the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS). NMIS is already adding to existing services such as the Scottish Manufacturing Advisory Service (SMAS) to enhance the sector's skills, test new processes or technologies and de-risk investment.

Within the manufacturing industries, we recognise the particular economic strength provided by the Grangemouth industrial cluster, as Scotland's foremost concentration of industrial and manufacturing activity. However, with that economic strength also comes 30% of all Scottish industrial emissions. A specific focus on Grangemouth is therefore key to the Just Transition. In 2020, **we will establish a Grangemouth Future Industry Board** to coordinate public sector initiatives on sustaining economic activity at the Grangemouth industrial cluster, whilst supporting its transition to our low-carbon future. Membership will include representatives of Scottish Government, agencies and Falkirk Council, and it will engage closely with those businesses with an interest in this work. It will focus on work to unlock potential investment that boosts economic development, innovation, longevity and competitiveness of the sites, with decarbonisation woven through all aspects of its work.

Carbon capture, usage, and storage (CCUS) represents a clear area of opportunity for businesses to innovate, and support our wider ambitions. CCUS is essential for delivery of Net Zero 2045 and our Green Recovery. **We will continue to support and invest in the development of CCUS projects in Scotland.** We will also **commission a suite of research projects for CCUS**, starting in September 2020, including research on regulatory mapping, that will help shape policy to support the development of new CCUS infrastructure.

While the recent publication of the UK Government's position on business models for the deployment of CCUS in the UK is welcome, there is a pressing need for further clarity on this front by the end of this year, in order to give industry confidence to bring forward investment decisions. We will press the UK Government to provide early confirmation of the allocation of funding from the £800 million CCUS Infrastructure Fund to support the development of CCUS projects and low-carbon hydrogen production, in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

We will continue to support the North East CCUS (NECCUS), an industry-led alliance drawn from industry, academia, membership organisations and private sector bodies to promote CCUS in Scotland. We have provided £300,000 to support its establishment, and activities include delivery of the Scottish Net Zero Roadmap, and representing Scotland at UK and European industrial cluster discussions. **We will work with NECCUS and Scottish Government agencies on the development of a Scottish Net Zero Roadmap** throughout 2021. This is the second phase of work funded through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. It will identify opportunities for inward investment and how to take advantage of low carbon infrastructure to provide a service for the rest of the UK and Europe.

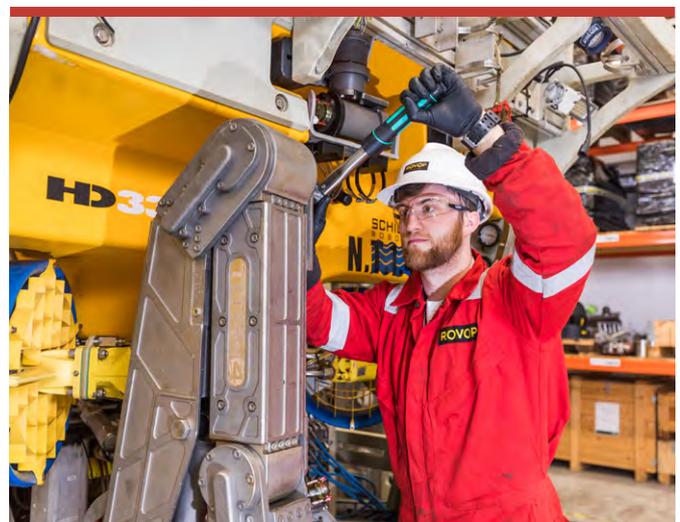
We will consult stakeholders on the scope, operation and governance of a £5 million Carbon Capture and Utilisation Challenge Fund which will deliver funding to projects from April 2022 for two years. Utilisation of captured CO₂ (CCU) is a growing but underdeveloped market with opportunities in the food and drink and agricultural sectors amongst others. A CCU innovation fund would provide a stimulus for innovation and by pump priming projects, it will speed up development of market opportunities in Scotland. Resource and capital investment to support the fund would enable projects to develop and test products and to enable capture infrastructure developments at emissions sources for use in utilisation projects.

We will **publish a refreshed Energy Strategy** which will collate all these actions into one coherent strategy with the collective aim of transition to net zero and to support our green recovery.

We will publish an updated **Offshore Wind Policy Statement**. This will build on detailed and rolling consultation with stakeholders, and will set out – alongside the Sectoral Marine Plan for Scotland – a new level of ambition for offshore wind in Scottish waters, which will play a vital part in achieving net zero and driving a green recovery.

Supporting innovation in the North East

The North East of Scotland is recognised globally as a centre of excellence in oil and gas and continues to play an important role in our energy mix. This sector, and the skills and expertise it has to offer, will be key to helping to design the diverse energy system we need for the future, including options such as hydrogen production and the development of floating wind and marine energy, with many businesses already diversifying into these areas. However, we know it will be disproportionately impacted by the crisis, with predictions there may be up to 30,000 job losses in the sector. As part of our economic recovery, and our mission to achieve net zero, we must support the region to find new, sustainable, and green opportunities in energy, boosting skills and employment opportunities.



We have established a **£62 million Energy Transition Fund** to support businesses in the oil, gas and energy sectors over the next five years as they grow and diversify, and help attract private sector investment in the region. The investment, with a focus on the North East, underpins the region's ambitions to become a world leader in the transition to net zero, helping Scotland meet its ambitious targets on climate change. The investment will also benefit the wider Scottish energy sector and supply chain, working with local businesses to support sustainable jobs and maximise inclusive economic growth across the country.

Hydrogen policy

We know that Scotland will require a diverse and balanced energy mix to meet our emissions targets. In order for the energy transition to be successful, security of supply, affordability and access to viable alternative options need to be combined with innovative and smart emissions reduction action. Against this backdrop, it is clear that hydrogen will play a key role in enhancing, supporting and completing the energy transition across a range of sectors, aiding economic recovery through production for the domestic market and export, and generating jobs.

Scotland has a strong track record of supporting Hydrogen innovation and we are committed to continuing this. **We will provide £6.9 million of funding for SGN's H100 project in Fife** which will be a world-first programme using green hydrogen to heat around 300 local homes and create an estimated 100 jobs in its first phase.

To take a more strategic approach to hydrogen to capitalise on the success and innovation so far we will produce a **Hydrogen Policy Statement and Hydrogen Action Plan** to support the expected growth of the hydrogen economy in Scotland and prepare for the role that hydrogen may play in achieving net-zero targets. This will be done before the end of 2020, as a companion to the Climate Change Plan Update.

Procurement and supply chain initiatives for sustainable economic recovery

The pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains. This is perhaps most acutely felt in relation to supplies of medical equipment. However, focused collaboration across Government and enterprise agencies meant we were able to successfully meet demand in the NHS. Across many areas – notably testing and PPE – we have seen the benefits of much closer links between the private and public sector and it is vital we learn from and build upon that. Scotland's life sciences sector remains a growth sector for the Scottish economy, employs 41,100 people, and makes a disproportionate contribution to Scotland's business research and development (BERD) figures.

To further strengthen the ability of the sector to innovate and to support Scotland's NHS and Social Care sector, we will work to establish a **Scottish Health and Industry Partnership** to rapidly coordinate work that can benefit both Scotland's economy and our health and wellbeing priorities. This partnership will accelerate innovation in Scotland to solve real problems in the NHS and Social care, creating jobs and opportunities for businesses as we have done with meeting the PPE challenge. This will deliver innovation at scale, maximising regional, academic, and industrial innovation to support delivery of the Scottish Government's Remobilise, Recover and Redesign Framework for the NHS and Social Care and support economic recovery.

We have seen, through working together on PPE, that government can act as a catalyst for supply chain development in areas of strategic interest. We want that level of collaboration to continue. And learning from this experience, **we will roll out Supply Chain Development Programmes** across key sectors of the economy, where we see genuine sustainable economic potential. These will be targeted at existing and prospective suppliers based in Scotland, and enhance participant

companies' fitness to compete for public contracts, help to secure best value for taxpayers and help Scottish suppliers to grow and compete globally. An immediate priority will be analysis of existing supply chains, identification of opportunities for increased local capability and enhanced resilience.

We will also use our power as a large scale buyer to **establish a zero emission heavy duty vehicle programme**, accelerating the development and uptake of such vehicles in the public and private sectors and creating new opportunities for Scottish companies through the development of innovative solutions. The programme has been developed in partnership between Transport Scotland and Scottish Enterprise with a minimum investment of £1 million in 2020-21. We will **invest in the establishment of a zero emission drivetrain testing facility in 2021**, with a focus on hydrogen fuel cells to accelerate the development of these vehicles. We will also **establish a new resource to support research and product development in zero emission mobility through pooling academic capability and enabling collaborations**. We will also use our procurement activities as an opportunity to promote fair working practices to ensure that contractors adopt such approaches.

Across the bus sector we have seen bold commitments to zero-carbon fleet renewal, and a number of operators are actively engaged in projects to get to battery electric and hydrogen buses on our streets. One of the challenges for the sector has been the greater upfront capital cost of new technologies and associated infrastructure investments, and COVID-19 has undoubtedly elevated these challenges. But, evidence is building that battery-electric buses are moving towards comparable total ownership costs to diesel vehicles, which means we are reaching a pivotal point for our transition to zero-emission transport.

We have recently made an additional £9m available to support immediate ultra low and zero emission fleet renewal investments. In the lead up to the Scottish National Investment Bank launch, engagement is underway with operators on options to support the net-zero transition, and Scottish Enterprise is also providing proactive support to the supply chain to assist its transition to lean, zero emission manufacturing. But there are still challenges to overcome. We will work with the sector, the supply-chain, energy network companies and financial institutions to co-design creative solutions for tackling the hurdles that remain, while also working to stimulate opportunities for immediate and strategic investment in zero or low emission buses.

Building on our successive Vessel Replacement and Deployment Plans we will produce and maintain a long-term plan and investment programme for new ferries and development at ports to improve resilience, reliability, capacity, and accessibility, increase standardisation, and reduce emissions to meet the needs of island communities and give confidence on our ongoing commitment.

We will also work collaboratively across the public sector developing tools and guidance and a practical approach to influence and empower buyer, supplier and key stakeholder communities to use public procurement to support a green recovery and our wider climate and circular economy ambitions through procurement, embedding climate considerations in organisational procurement strategies by 2021 and reporting progress in annual procurement reports. We will also expect the use of all relevant procurement activities as an opportunity to promote fair working practices for the benefit of those working on public contracts.

**18,000
hectares
of new forest
per year by 2024**



Nature based Investment

Investment in forestry infrastructure and the domestic supply chain offers a real opportunity for growth. Forestry presents an important commercial natural resource, provides spaces to improve personal health and wellbeing, and through an ambitious programme of planting can contribute towards Scotland's net zero commitments. Having created over 22,000 hectares of new woodland in the last two years, we will continue to invest in nature-based solutions to climate change, and to increase overall forest cover in Scotland. As part of our low carbon fund investment, **Scottish Forestry will receive an additional £100 million to increase new planting and Forestry and Land Scotland will receive an additional £30 million to expand Scotland's national forests and land.** We will also provide **£20 million to further increase tree nursery capacity**, investing in new and redeveloped facilities to support higher production. This investment will enable us to **increase tree planting and woodland creation from the current level of 12,000 hectares in 2020/21 up to 18,000 hectares in 2024/25.**

We want to see wood and forestry based markets grow in Scotland. This includes growing the woodland carbon market by 50% over the next 5 years through the Woodland Carbon Code, and working with partners to support new approaches to financing private sector investment in nature-based solutions. We are committed to increasing the annual volume of Scottish timber going into construction from 2.2 million cubic meters (2018) to 2.6 million cubic meters in 2021/2022. We will collaborate with the Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies Industry Leadership Group to deliver this target by supporting research into timber engineering, increasing the understanding of timber as a building material among architects and supporting efforts to increase customer demand.

Our land and natural resources already contribute to Scotland's economy, however we could do more to fully realise economic opportunities to support recovery whilst protecting biodiversity. We will **commission advice from the Scottish Land Commission on how we can ensure our land is factored in to our economic thinking** and to explore new policy levers that could shape land markets in a way that will help us support recovery and build resilience. This includes reviewing the housing land market, advice on legislative measures addressing concentrated land ownership, and consideration of tax and fiscal reforms to support greater diversity of land ownership, particularly among communities, and ensure that is used for the benefit of greener, thriving local areas.



Restoring our peatland

Peatland restoration has a key role in responding to the linked climate emergency and biodiversity challenge, and is a key component of a green economic recovery post-COVID-19. Since 2012, 25,480 hectares of peatland have undergone restoration in Scotland at a cost of £31.4 million. Looking ahead we are committed to **significantly increasing the rate of peatland restoration** as one of the transformative changes needed to meet the our emissions targets. In the 2020-21 budget we announced funding of £20 million as the first step of a 10 year £250 million commitment to restore 20,000 hectares of Scottish peatland annually, towards a total of 250,000 hectares by 2030. Investment of £20-£25 million per annum is estimated to build towards the creation of around 200 jobs over 3-5 years, mostly in rural and remote areas.

Investing in biodiversity and ecological health

We will continue to support biodiversity, including through the **Biodiversity Challenge Fund**, with £3m funding in 2021-22 to augment a wide array of other biodiversity delivery activity as we seek to improve the state of nature in Scotland. This will also help support green skills and job opportunities. We will also **publish a high-level statement of intent on biodiversity** before the end of the year. We also intend to commission pilot 'Miyawaki' mini forests to trial this innovative approach to restoring biodiversity and fighting the climate crisis. These have the potential to improve urban biodiversity and green space for local communities and to involve people as part of citizen science.

Climate change will increasingly affect the demand for water resources and the ability of our water environment to accommodate water use. We are already experiencing increased periods of water scarcity in certain parts of Scotland. Our **River Basin Management Planning process will continue to make a positive contribution to protecting these valuable water resources, and, through our Water Environment Fund, easing the pressures on migratory fish such as Atlantic salmon.**

The health of our uplands and the importance of effective deer management in supporting a green recovery and in contributing to addressing the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss is well understood and recognised. We will publish our response to the Werritty report on grouse moor management this autumn to be followed later by our response to the Independent Working Group report on deer management. We will also bring into force protection for mountain hares as provided for in the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) (Scotland) Act 2020, alongside licensing arrangements which will allow proportionate and responsible management of the species where necessary. While plans to legislate on the control of foxes had to be postponed due to COVID-19 we remain committed to taking the proposals forward in the next parliament.

Improving land management, and protecting our rural economy

Our rural economy must also be at the forefront of our economic and environmental recovery. Farming contributes around 67,000 jobs and a GVA of around £1.3 billion to our economy. It is at the heart of rural Scotland and has a potential to contribute to our national recovery from COVID-19 through both job creation and a truly green recovery. We will **bring forward recommendations for new mechanisms of agricultural support that secure a productive sector better able to contribute towards delivering Scotland's climate change outcomes and promote new employment opportunities.** We will co-develop new ways of working with our farming and crofting communities through farmer-led groups supported by scientific and economic expertise from SRUC and our main research providers. These will build upon the work of the Walker Committee for sustainable beef farming to establish groups such as arable, dairy and hill farming. We will ensure that there is a flexible approach across regulatory regimes to maximise the benefit to the rural economy.

Across many rural areas, crofting delivers valuable local benefits, providing jobs and income for some of our most fragile communities. A successful crofting sector helps our rural communities to thrive, and it can be at the forefront of developing new and innovative practices which support our progress to net zero. **We will extend the work of the Scottish Land Matching Service to encourage uptake of vacant and/or underutilised crofts by new entrants.** Bringing these crofts into use will provide opportunities for jobs, housing, and economic growth in those communities.

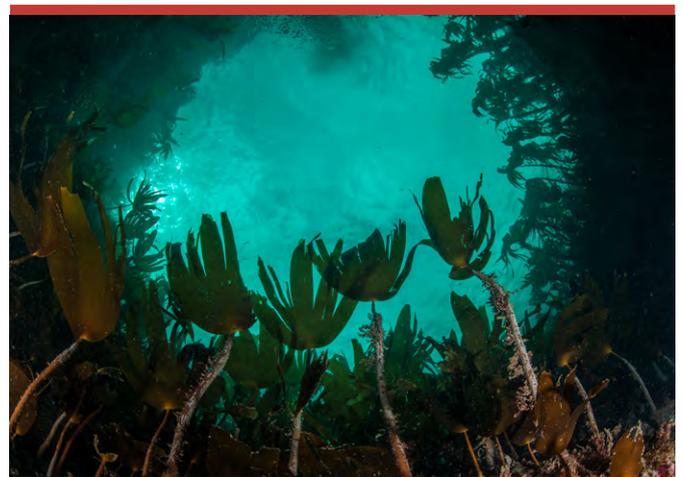
We will better enable the sector contribute to the Scottish Government's wider climate change commitments and to contribute to a green economic recovery by continuing to develop of the Agricultural Transformation Programme utilising the Agricultural Transformation Fund to introduce a £10 million capital grant scheme that will enable farmers and crofters to purchase equipment that should assist in reducing their greenhouse gas emissions, and support practice change.

We will **publish our third Land Use Strategy**, setting out how we will maximise the contribution our land will make to tackling climate change. We will also **work towards the establishment of a statutory national Nitrogen Balance Sheet**, with a programme of stakeholder engagement expected to begin in Autumn 2020. This will enable a better understanding of the flow of nitrogen within the economy and support our national greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.

In recent years, Scotland's food and drink industry has been one of our strongest economic performers, particularly for our rural economy, but the pandemic has hit it hard with models suggesting a 20% reduction in turnover this year. Recovery is vital and must help create resilience, create opportunities for renewal, and safeguard jobs and businesses in some of our most rural and fragile communities. We will work with the sector to **launch our joint recovery plan** focussed on stimulating demand for Scottish products in key markets and supporting businesses to capitalise on that demand,

including a new Local Food Strategy for Scotland and work to transform Scotland's convenience store sector to maximise local promotion and purchase of fresh, healthy Scottish produce.

Scotland's natural larder sits at the heart of our food and drink success – the impact of COVID-19 on our food and drink industry also threatens our producers. As part of our joint recovery plan with the food and drink industry to build back better, we will support **the creation of new agriculture producer organisations** to strengthen the position of farmers, food producers and crofters in the supply chain. We will also begin developing farmer-focused supply chains, developing new models in a range of markets, with farmers and food producers at their core, with clear contracts and terms – helping to make farming more sustainable and profitable in the longer term.



We will develop a Blue Economy Action Plan to launch a programme of collaborative projects across the public sector, Scotland's science base, marine industries and the marine environmental sector. We will set out clear actions to strengthen the resilience of our marine industries ranging from renewable energy to fisheries (and the marine science, research and innovation which underpin them) and to support coastal communities, recognising the vital importance to our marine economy of the abundant natural capital in Scotland's seas and rivers. This will include

supporting the sustainable growth of aquaculture – which provides many jobs in the most remote locations and island communities – by improved regulatory processes, based on the application of available evidence and continued enhancements in the scientific base, to provide more benefit to the communities where aquaculture is based. Our Blue Economy Action Plan will harness and bolster Scotland’s international profile as a successful, modern and innovative maritime nation.

Our approach will encompass work across the broad range of marine sectors, including seafood, tourism, energy, transport and science. We will work with stakeholders to strengthen the resilience of our fishing industry and local fishing communities through our Future Fisheries Management Strategy and our Inshore Modernisation Programme. This will include bringing forward firm plans to encourage greater landing of catch into Scottish ports.

We know that poor quality recycling and contamination are linked to confusion about how best to recycle. We need to make it easier for people to do the right thing by ensuring clearer information and labelling; promoting more consistent collection services; and providing stronger incentives for recycling. We will therefore establish a **£70 million fund to improve local authority collection infrastructure**, and develop a new route map to reduce waste and meet our waste and recycling targets for 2025. We will work with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) in the coming year to **evaluate the Household Recycling Charter and its Code of Practice** as a key step in developing a future model of recycling collections. We will continue to work with the UK Government and other devolved administrations on **reforms to the packaging extended producer responsibility regime**, which we expect will deliver improved funding for local authorities in the future.



Developing the circular economy

Creating a more circular economy promotes sustainable and inclusive economic growth and is fundamental to our transition to becoming a net zero society. An estimated 80% of our global climate emissions are currently linked to the production, consumption and waste of products and resources. This must involve a fundamental re-think about how we use and reuse materials and how we handle waste. We must ensure that we do not export environmental harm to other countries in pursuit of our own recycling targets.

£70 million
to improve
local recycling

Scotland's Recycling Summit in December 2019 recognised that Scotland has come a long way over the last 20 years. Recycling is now part of everyday life and our collection and treatment infrastructure can recycle nearly 60% of our waste. However, Summit participants identified a need for further interventions – if we are to accelerate progress and meet our ambitious recycling targets for 2025.

Around 14% of Scotland's waste is currently processed outside Scotland, representing a lost economic opportunity. A key priority is to stimulate the development of reprocessing infrastructure within Scotland to deal with future waste and materials, particularly plastic, as close to source as possible. Implementation of our Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for single-use drinks containers will provide improved quantity and quality of materials. We will work with Local Authorities and the future DRS scheme administrator(s) to **explore options that will unlock reprocessing investments, including pricing and incentive schemes, to create jobs and a ready supply of recycled material for new packaging.**

We intend to encourage more sustainable consumer purchasing by **introducing legislation to increase the carrier bag minimum charge from 5p to 10p in this parliamentary session.** We will **consult on banning a number of problematic plastic items identified in the EU's Single Use Plastics Directive**, and outline how we will give effect to the wider requirements of the Directive before the end of 2020. We also plan to take further steps to **consult on a charge on single-use disposable beverage cups.**

The pandemic has meant we have had to rethink our legislative agenda in the final year of this Parliament, necessitating a delay in a number of areas. As part of this, we took the difficult decision to delay introduction of our Circular Economy Bill. However, we remain committed to achieving circular economy outcomes and will continue to work with stakeholders to pursue these.

We will continue to take the necessary actions to manage the risks to our environment from the UK's exit from the EU. Guided by our Environment Strategy's vision and outcomes, we will make all necessary adjustments to our laws and policies to maintain or improve environmental standards in Scotland. We will implement measures in the Continuity Bill, so that our environmental policies continue to keep pace with EU environmental principles and to ensure we have proportionate, effective environmental governance for Scotland. This will include our new environmental governance body, Environmental Standards Scotland.

Taking national and local action on climate change

As part of our plans, government must lead by example and we must also ask the same of other public bodies. We will further strengthen our legislative framework by shortly bringing forward regulations **requiring public bodies to set a date for when they will become net zero emitters** and introduce science based targets for their emissions.

To support the plan we will undertake a significant programme of stakeholder engagement, ensuring we use the talents available in Scotland to inform our approach and promote public understanding of the role they can play. Subject to COVID-19 restrictions we will **hold the first meeting of an independent, representative citizens' assembly on climate change in late autumn.** We will also continue to work with the UK Government, Glasgow City Council, Police Scotland and other partners to deliver a safe, inclusive and successful COP26 that supports a global transition to net zero in a way that is fair and just. To ensure national-level expertise, we are committed to seeking the **establishment of an office of the UK Committee on Climate Change in Scotland**, to ensure Scotland has access to the best possible independent expert advice.

While much of our action must be national, ensuring our actions are at the scale required, we have seen across Scotland the power of communities to harness local action for national results. We will introduce a network of regional hubs across Scotland that will **empower communities to develop local solutions** to making the transition to net zero and climate resilient living. We will also **develop a network of Climate Action Towns** targeted at small towns with little historical involvement in climate action. This will support them to reduce what they use, recycle more, and cut their emissions and become carbon neutral, as part of our aim to ensure that Scotland's response to the global climate emergency is a truly national endeavour.

Climate justice recognises that the poor and vulnerable at home and overseas are the first to be affected by climate change, and will suffer the worst, yet have done little or nothing to cause the problem. Our world first Climate Justice Fund will continue to support communities in our partner countries of Malawi, Zambia, and Rwanda become more resilient to climate change. The powerful work done to date will help inform how we best support climate justice initiatives beyond 2021.

Whilst reaching net zero emissions is at the heart of Scotland's approach to tackling climate change, we must also prepare for the impacts of global change which are already locked in. We are already seeing warming in Scotland, with more extreme weather events and rising sea levels. The consequences of these changes can be tragic and as a nation we must adapt to these changes. In support of enhanced adaptation and climate resilience as part of a green recovery, **we will invest an extra £150 million in flood risk management**, over a five-year period from 2021/22. This substantial investment complements the £42 million provided annually to local authorities to support investment in vital flood protection schemes throughout the country. To help us adapt to the threat of sea level rise and protect our natural coastal defences from erosion **we will invest £12 million in coastal change adaptation**.

Strengthening links with the global economy

Attracting inward investment

Our internationalisation agenda continues to focus on strengthening links with the global economy to maximise opportunities for trade, attract investment, share skills and expertise, and collaborate to support innovation and job creation through sustainable inclusive economic growth.

Create
100,000 jobs
through inward
investment over the
next ten years



Before the end of 2020, we will publish our vision for trade, that sets out the principles and values that will shape the trading relationships we want Scotland to have in the future. This vision will underpin how we take forward implementation of our three cornerstone international economy plans and crucially will be used to influence the approach the UK Government takes in developing trade agreements with other countries and blocs. It will reflect the Scottish Government's aims of fair work, inclusive growth, supporting the wellbeing of people and communities and of course, making the transition to net zero, as well as including a set of indicators which future trade-related decisions – both import and export related – can be tested against.

Inward investors represent just 3% of businesses in Scotland but contribute disproportionately to our economy – providing 34% of employment, 50% of turnover, and 77% of exports. They also support Scottish businesses to innovate, grow and develop through competition, by building and sharing knowledge through local supply chains, and by bringing fresh talent and capital investment.

We have already published A Trading Nation, our export growth plan, which we will refresh in 2021 to take account of Scotland being outside the EU. This year we will also publish Shaping Scotland's Economy, our inward investment plan that will take a targeted approach to driving the creation of highly skilled jobs in key sectors for Scotland's future economy. The collective measures to be outlined in the plan, including increasing our annual spend on Inward Investment support to £20 million a year, could deliver 100,000 high value jobs in Scotland over the next decade, with the potential to deliver an increase in government revenue of £680 million by 2040 and grow GDP by £4.2 billion. This creates a strong proposition for Scotland, working in partnership with our enterprise and skills agencies, in particular Scottish Development International, to market its future-facing skills internationally, as well as helping to retrain and re-employ people at risk of redundancy in other sectors.

By the end of 2021 we will publish our Capital Investment Plan, our third inter-linked plan, setting out how we will attract more private sector investment to Scotland and deliver more effective leverage of private investment into projects that provide public good, grow our economy and create jobs.

Attracting Talent to Scotland

Scotland, along with most Western countries has clear demographic challenges: an ageing population; declining birth rate; and rural depopulation. The impacts of Brexit and the end of freedom of movement of people could have a devastating impact on our population and demography, with localised challenges felt most strongly in rural and remote communities. Attracting the necessary level and skills of migrants to Scotland is crucial to our economic prospects and demographic sustainability. Inward migration benefits our nation through the skills and expertise of people who choose to come and live in Scotland, boosting our ability to attract global companies looking to invest.

Through the Population Programme and Ministerial Population Taskforce, we will work closely with partners to develop and publish a Population Strategy in early 2021. This will set out Scotland's demographic challenge and the actions we will take to address it, identifying which actions will fall to local partners and which to the Scottish Government. The Strategy will bring together the different strands of activity across Scottish Government and make the case for further powers to develop a tailored approach to migration.

The end of freedom of movement presents a distinct risk for employers and communities across Scotland. We will however, ensure Scotland remains a welcoming, open, and competitive nation. As we come to the end of the transition period and the deadline for applying to the EU Settlement Scheme nears, we will support people who have chosen to make Scotland their home. We will maintain the **Stay in Scotland campaign** to provide information, advice and support to those navigating the Scheme. We will launch a **Welcome to Scotland resource** before the end of 2020, providing practical, accessible information for people who have either recently moved or are considering moving to Scotland.

The ending of freedom of movement is also a particular concern to many rural areas and rural economies where reduced rates of inward migration can have huge impacts. Many employers in these areas cannot afford to offer the high salary rates required to meet the UK Government's threshold to qualify for a visa, or to pay the immigration costs and fees set by the UK Government. We will therefore develop and publish proposals for a **rural migration pilot** in Scotland, working with our partners, local government and the Expert Advisory Group for Migration and Population. We will publish advice from the Expert Advisory Group on a rural migration pilot by the end of 2020 and develop a delivery model and proposal to present to the UK Government in early 2021. A key element of attracting people to live in rural Scotland is the availability of housing, and this will require a flexible approach to the planning system.

The UK Government's proposals for a future immigration system do nothing to address the needs of Scotland's communities or businesses, or those who want to call Scotland home. **We will continue to fund TalentScotland**, providing information, guidance and support to Scottish-based companies seeking to employ or retain international staff, and to inward investors considering Scotland as a location for their business. **We will continue to argue for a migration system tailored to Scotland's needs, including a Scottish Visa**, and work with partners and employers to develop proposals that suit their requirements. We will also support the roll out of an overseas skills recognition framework, to help employers recruit qualified migrant workers into jobs, including those in priority sectors such as health and social care.

Scotland as a global leader

Scotland is committed to participating as a proactive international partner, including our future approach to European engagement following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. We are ready to engage and support others as we continue the global effort against COVID-19. We are also committed to working with others to tackle the global climate emergency. In the course of the next year, we will update Scotland's International Framework and Policy Statement in light of the COVID-19 crisis to ensure it clearly articulates our international position and priorities.

Through the global crisis, we have collaborated with international partners, using our networks to secure insights into best practice in reducing transmission and the other harms caused by the virus. Our teams around the world have worked hard to secure vital supplies of PPE and other equipment. We will build on this internationally networked approach to COVID-19 to tackle other global challenges. The impacts of the pandemic increase the need for ambitious and cooperative action in areas such as climate change. But it also brings challenges to areas already expected to be impacted by the UK's damaging withdrawal from the EU. We will work collectively across all areas of government and particularly in our strengthened overseas network to ensure recovery reinforces Scotland's diplomatic reputation and keeps Scotland open, connected and able to make a positive contribution internationally.

Scotland's commitment to being a good global citizen is part of its attraction as a destination for inward migration. **Delivering on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, not just as a nation but as a partner for developing countries, is important as we move into the recovery phase. Our work on Policy Coherence – considering not just our needs but the needs of others overseas – is vital as we strive to build a green economy and “leave no one behind” in line with the ethos of the UN SDGs.

That approach, of working with others collaboratively, has been a key feature and strength of our international development work to date. We have worked closely with our partners to deliver projects in areas such as health, education, justice and renewable energy, despite the recent and ongoing challenges of COVID-19. Our peer-to-peer projects (involving NHS Scotland, Police Scotland and Scottish Water) support the development of our partner countries. We have continued to commit to Scotland being an outward-looking, good global citizen, making distinctive contributions towards addressing global challenges and injustices, by sharing our knowledge, skills and technical expertise in our partner countries, and learning from them.

It is clear COVID-19 will remain a threat for some time to come. We will therefore also begin to review and open a discussion on our approach to international development, ensuring that we are focusing our contribution on areas where we can make the biggest difference against the backdrop of the new reality of COVID-19, and ensuring that as much of our funding as possible reaches our partner countries which need it most. We will ring-fence £2 million of the International Development Fund in this year to contribute to COVID-19 efforts in our partner countries.

Our international connections are important to us. They bring us fresh perspectives and provide the opportunity for us to share our knowledge and expertise. We established the Wellbeing Economy Governments group because we know we can gain a lot from working with like-minded countries to promote sustainable and inclusive growth to raise living standards for all. Scotland House Brussels was established over 20 years ago, and continues to provide a strong platform for engagement with EU institutions and other stakeholders, promoting Scotland and the exchange of expertise and ideas. Scotland has broadened its reach globally by significantly enhancing our international network which now includes offices in London, Dublin, Berlin, Paris, Ottawa, Washington DC, and Beijing.

Building strength in our local Economies

Community Wealth Building

COVID-19 has had a profound impact on the way that we work and has changed our perceptions of the communities around us. It has forced us to look local. That theme runs throughout our Programme for Government with new commitments around local supply chain development and 20 minute neighbourhoods. This is also the time to build on the progress we have been making on Community Wealth Building (CWB). This is a way of working that looks to reorganise our local economies to maximise local opportunities and resilience – ensuring that local people and businesses have a genuine stake in producing, owning and enjoying the wealth they create.

Our approach considers how the financial, land and property assets of our major employers, so-called ‘anchor institutions’, in communities, whether they are public, private or third sector, can be used to support local economic opportunity. There are different ways to do this. The procurement aspect looks at how sustainable procurement techniques can lock value into the communities that public money is there to serve, encouraging and supporting more local businesses to secure contracts; protecting and creating local jobs; and working with our contractors to adopt Fair Work practices.

Communities can be anchors too. Community Trusts play key roles in the resilience and wellbeing within communities; and their impact in helping communities weather the COVID-19 emergency has been documented by Community Land Scotland. We only need to look at the current crisis to understand the critical value community power and local economic energy can have on a place and the people who live there. We want to harness the energy of communities to ensure they are a core part of how we do economic development in Scotland.

Supporting The Third Sector and Social Enterprise

Within our communities, the third sector and social enterprises play a crucial role – supporting community development, inclusive growth, and providing lifeline services, facilities, and employment. A thriving third sector and growing volunteering is vital to Scotland. Its economic and social contribution is vast and as such it is an essential partner to Government. The Scottish Government invests around £500 million annually in the third sector, leveraging a turnover estimated at £6 billion in normal times. However, these are not normal times and the trading environment for social enterprise in particular has been severely constrained during the crisis.

Beyond the immediate need our role must be to create the best conditions for the third sector and volunteering to thrive and contribute to a recovering economy and society. As we move from the immediate response to recovery we will now refocus part of the Communities Fund into a **£25 million Community and Third Sector Recovery Programme**. This will include business support and investment to help organisations adapt their operations and income generation to increase sustainability. This funding will support our third sector to continue to support people and communities in responding to the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

We will begin work to explore other strands of **social investment including capital loans** to support the sector to work together and co-locate as the demand for office space declines, whilst leaving organisations with an asset in future years to enhance sustainability, and ensuring that this benefits all areas, particularly those hardest hit by the crisis.

We will also build upon our existing and extensive work to support social enterprises and Credit Unions which provide vital financial services for some of our most deprived communities. We will launch the next **Social Enterprise Action Plan**, by the autumn, and the **Credit Union Strategy** by the end of the parliamentary term – both of these are essential to a wellbeing economy.

The legal environment within which Scotland's 29,000 charities operate is critical to all of our ambitions for the third sector. Delayed by the crisis, we will now re-start our process of co-production with the sector to review **Charity Law** and publish our proposals by the end of this parliament.

Transforming places

Communities across Scotland – particularly those in remote and rural areas as well as in urban regions – have benefitted significantly from European Structural Funds, with the current 2014-2020 programme worth over £780 million. The UK's exit from the EU means that we will lose access to this vital funding, hindering the progress that has been made in supporting the economic and social wellbeing of these communities. The UK Government has committed to replacing this support with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, but as of now, we have not been given any clear detail on how this will operate in practice. We will therefore continue to move forward on the assumption that an appropriate allocation of the Shared Prosperity Fund will be devolved to the Scottish Government to disburse in line with our own policies and targets. We will work quickly to **establish a Scottish Programme that will be focussed on promoting place-based economic development and cohesion, helping communities across Scotland to improve key economic, social and wellbeing performance indicators**.

To support economic recovery and boost long term inclusive and sustainable growth, **we will continue to deliver the city region and regional growth deals**. The Scottish Government has committed over £1.9 billion to this key programme to boost regional economic development through investing in strategic projects developed and delivered by local authorities and their partners in the public and private sectors. This includes recently announced £50 million investments for both the future Falkirk and Islands Deals.



Our rural and island communities have faced a particular challenge, especially as a result of lockdown and the disruption to tourism. But even before now, we know there were issues of poverty of opportunity, and a need to ensure high quality jobs to allow young people to remain in their communities. We will **establish a £2 million Green Recovery Programme for our islands**, opening in October 2020, to help deliver on low-carbon related commitments in the National Islands Plan. This will complement existing funding for the previously announced PfG commitment to support repopulation of our rural and island communities. This will include specific ring-fenced funding for capital projects on islands relating to net-zero and green recovery objectives, creating high-quality, skilled, green jobs in some of our most remote and vulnerable communities. Building on our response

to the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, we will also **take forward our commitment to work with our partners to capitalise on existing investment in the rural leadership programme**, supporting micro and SME businesspeople to develop new skills and grow their businesses through a programme of professional and self-development.

Many of our communities – particularly those in the highlands and islands – are dependent on tourism and culture, sectors which have been particularly hard hit by the crisis. While accommodation providers have been able to reopen since 15 July, initial reports indicate significantly lower occupancy rates, average daily rates paid for rooms sold and revenue per available rooms compared to the same week in 2019. For associated sectors – including hospitality and recreation providers – there will be ongoing concerns which may affect reopening, including adapting to social distancing. A safe and strong recovery for tourism will be vital to economic recovery, inclusive growth and wellbeing.

Our **new tourism strategy, *Scotland Outlook 2030*, will form the framework for our recovery**. We will work with VisitScotland to develop an appropriate recovery marketing strategy, to identify short, medium and longer term market opportunities to support tourism and increase visitors. Understanding the severe impact on our rural communities, we will **build on the work of the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund**, and the £9 million we have already committed, by exploring how we can provide continued support for our most vulnerable locations.

Having a skilled workforce is important for our recovery and we will work with Skills Development Scotland, through the Tourism Recovery Taskforce, to ensure that the sector has the right skills in the right places to support our recovery. Part of that will be consideration of support for the most skilled within the sector who are at risk of redundancy or reduced working hours and helping those who have lost their jobs to find new roles.

As recommended by the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, **we will also create a ‘Culture Collective’ to harness and maximise the contribution of Scotland’s creative workforce** to the building of a wellbeing economy. In alignment with the Culture Strategy for Scotland – informed by the National Partnership for Culture and other national stakeholders – we will take an inclusive, partnership approach to supporting the communities, individuals and organisations hardest hit by the pandemic to fully participate in Scotland’s social, economic and cultural life.

We will work with the creative industries to help ensure we have the skills to build a strong, resilient future. Building on work already done by the sector, we will work with the creative industries to ensure that the right skills to support creativity and to enable a more business-focussed and entrepreneurial approach.

The UK’s withdrawal from the EU means that Scotland can no longer contribute to Creative Europe. It is vital that we continue to have access to European creative networks and that Scotland’s contribution can continue. We will partner with the UK Government to develop a successor to Creative Europe, ensuring that Scotland continues to benefit from a productive reciprocal relationship with Europe.

Scotland’s events sector continues to be particularly hard hit by the impact of the pandemic restrictions. Working with input from the Events Industry Advisory Group established at the outset of the pandemic, our immediate focus is to support the recovery of the sector. £10 million of funding has been made available specifically to help event organisers, festivals and supply chain businesses through this difficult period.

We also want to support and encourage innovative approaches to event delivery in light of COVID-19 and will help pilot events that might not otherwise be viable. We will also support a strong marketing and communications programme to regain public confidence when the time is right, in attending events, big and small.

We will also take a medium term focus which aligns with our stated intention to review the national events strategy. This piece of work was scheduled to complete during 2020 but commencement has been delayed due to the pandemic. This is, however, an opportunity to rethink how we support events in Scotland, how we build upon our established international reputation as an innovative host and how events can support our wider government priorities around economic and environmental sustainability. Our success in securing the 2023 Cycling World Championships will be used as a driver to deliver positive policy outcomes across several portfolios.

The response from Gaelic bodies to the COVID-19 crisis was excellent and support was provided in education, in broadcasting and in the arts. The Scottish Government will **continue to invest in Gaelic initiatives and projects with the aim of increasing the numbers of people speaking, using and learning the Gaelic language**. The focus of support will continue to be the Gaelic bodies such as Bòrd na Gàidhlig, MG ALBA, Stòrlann and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig but also with the recognition in our Faster Rate of Progress initiative that a number of public authorities can also contribute to Gaelic development. The priorities will continue to be Gaelic in education, broadcasting, publishing, adult learning and the arts with an emphasis on language use and economic benefits in areas of low population.



Chapter 2

PROMOTING LIFELONG HEALTH AND WELLBEING



The rainbows in windows across Scotland are testament to the remarkable response of our health and social care staff. We owe so much to them and the thousands of carers and volunteers who have provided, and continue to provide, vital support to those who need it most. In every community in Scotland people have shown incredible resilience, compassion and skill to provide everything from the most advanced intensive care to simple acts of kindness.

COVID-19 has highlighted and exacerbated inequalities that exist within our country. In response, we will promote lifelong health and wellbeing with an increased focus on **improving population health and tackling health inequalities** as we move into the next stage of living with COVID-19. We are also determined to further develop the strengths of our public health service.

We start from a position of strength. Patient satisfaction continues to be high in a range of patient surveys. We have record levels of health funding and staffing. Before the pandemic, Scotland's core A&E services had been the best performing in the UK for more than 5 years. But COVID-19 has tested our services like never before and it has underlined the necessity to address the underlying causes of ill-health and support continued reform of our health and social care services.

Embedding a world-class public health system

Scotland is moving to a new phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and the nature of our response must adapt. As we move forward we must renew and recover sustainably, whilst being ready to respond quickly to any significant localised resurgence of the virus, or to a return of widespread community transmission.

Remember **FACTS** for a safer Scotland

F A C T S	Face coverings	
	Avoid crowded places	
	Clean your hands regularly	
	Two metre distance	
	Self-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms	

nhsinform.scot/coronavirus
#WeAreScotland



Scotland's overall pandemic strategy is set out in *COVID-19: A Framework for Decision Making*. That strategy is to suppress the virus – driving the number of cases to the lowest levels possible and effectively eliminate it – and therefore enable as close to normal life as possible to resume and continue. At the same time we must remain vigilant and ready to respond quickly to prevent new cases transmitting onwards.

At the heart of our public health-led response to the virus is an effective partnership between Scotland's local public health teams and Public Health Scotland. This partnership has proven itself to be very effective in suppressing the virus – in particular through Test and Protect, surveillance and response – and will be critical to delivering vaccinations as and when an effective vaccine is available.

Testing

We know that meeting the challenge of COVID-19 requires a comprehensive set of public health measures. No single intervention on its own will suffice. **Our testing strategy is a key part of this approach.**

Our approach to testing is continually adapting as the pandemic progresses in Scotland, and it will continue to adapt as we head into winter and as the science and evidence base around the virus builds. The strategy focuses on a number of key objectives for testing:

- whole population testing of anyone with symptoms
- proactive case finding by testing contacts and testing in outbreaks
- protecting the vulnerable and preventing outbreaks through routine testing in high-risk settings such as care homes
- testing for direct patient care, to diagnose and to treat, and to support safe patient care as NHS services restart
- surveillance to build knowledge of the disease, track prevalence, understand transmission and monitor key sectors

One key development in the Strategy which will strengthen our surveillance work and help prevent the spread of the virus is the testing of contacts of COVID-19 index cases regardless of whether or not they have symptoms. This allows for further contacts to be identified and potential wider outbreaks to be contained.

However, testing does not in and of itself stop the virus spreading; it does not reduce the risk of becoming infected by the virus by touching a contaminated surface; and it does not mitigate the risk of being infected from droplets from an infectious person. The first line of defence against the virus is each and every one of us. That is why face coverings, avoiding crowded places, cleaning hands and surfaces, physical distancing and self-isolation when necessary remain key to keeping the virus under control.

To support our contact tracing efforts, we will launch, later this month, a proximity app '**Protect Scotland**' to inform users of the app when they have been a close contact of someone who has then tested positive for COVID-19. This will not replace the work of our contact tracers, but it will enhance it and add an additional means of notifying people that they may have been exposed to the virus and should isolate.

Seasonal flu and flu vaccination

We recognise the risk posed every year as a result of seasonal flu. At a time of an ongoing pandemic, that risk becomes even greater. We must ensure that we protect those who may be vulnerable from the seasonal flu at a time when there remains a risk from COVID-19. **Starting this year we will extend the offer of seasonal flu vaccination to all social care workers who provide direct personal care, all those 55 years and over, all those sharing a household with people who are in the shielding category for the purposes of COVID-19, and those aged 50-54 depending on vaccine supplies.**

We will embark on a campaign to raise public awareness, particularly amongst those groups who are newly eligible, and ensure we embed learning from seasonal flu expansion into COVID-19 vaccine planning.



Supporting those who have had the virus

We are continuing to learn about the longer term effects of the virus. For those who have received hospital care, recovery can be a long road. Most will recover with the support of those close to them, but some people may be left with post-traumatic disorders including anxiety, depression and PTSD, or longer term health problems including chronic pain, fatigue and breathlessness.

We will ensure recovery is a key part of our **Framework for Rehabilitation and Recovery**. This will focus not just on physical health but also on mental health and social support. To aid recovery, we will ensure that patients discharged from Intensive Care Units (ICU) who are assessed as needing mental health and other specialist support are able to receive appropriate treatment through a new network of local mental health services. These rehabilitation programmes will be extended nationwide to all Scottish ICUs.

Before the pandemic, we recognised the importance of ensuring people living with respiratory conditions can access clinically appropriate, safe and effective person-centred healthcare treatment and support. That becomes even more important now. Following consultation earlier this year, we are in the process of finalising our **Respiratory Care Action Plan for Scotland**. As our understanding of the impact COVID-19 has had on the health of the people of Scotland develops, including in relation to those that have developed long-term respiratory problems as a result of contracting the coronavirus, the final Respiratory Care Action Plan will respond to the implications and consequences of COVID-19 for many aspects of respiratory care going forward. We will continue to work with key stakeholders, including the third sector, on how best to raise awareness and engage with patients as we take this forward.

The impact of COVID-19 on minority ethnic people and communities

There is increasing evidence that COVID-19 has affected minority ethnic groups disproportionately and it has highlighted the deep-rooted health and socio-economic inequalities that minority ethnic communities face. The independent Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity (ERG) has put forward initial advice and recommendations on data, evidence, risk and systemic issues to ensure disparities can be identified quickly and resolved. This work highlighted that the lack of high-quality population-based data on ethnicity hampers our understanding of ethnic variations in COVID-19 and its outcomes in Scotland.

To overcome this the ERG recommended a number of actions which we will take forward, including:

- Making ethnicity a mandatory field for health databases
- Developing a linkage to the census
- Embedding the process of ethnicity data collection in the culture of the NHS in Scotland



NHS mobilisation

Routine services are being restarted across the country, with the approach and timing in each area carefully tailored to individual circumstances and demands. We are working closely with Health Boards on the further development and implementation of their individual mobilisation plans. NHS Scotland will have three core tasks over the coming months:

- To deliver as many of its normal services as possible, as safely as possible
- Ensuring we have the capacity that is necessary to deal with the continuing presence of COVID-19
- Preparing health and care services for winter

Our approach will continue to be informed by national and local clinical priorities, with a focus on people's quality of life. We will continue to work with Health Boards, local authorities, Royal Colleges, health and social care partnerships, professional bodies, unions and other key stakeholders to ensure our approach is robust and up-to-date and treats those most in need first. This work is being overseen by the Mobilisation Recovery Group (MRG), chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Health & Sport.

We must also ensure that we have the infrastructure and the capacity our NHS and care staff need to meet demands. The **National Elective Centre Programme** will deliver additional elective capacity across Scotland.

The first of the elective centres at the Golden Jubilee will open to patients in October 2020. In October construction will commence on the Highland Centre, with construction due to start on the Lothian, Grampian and Phase 2 of Golden Jubilee Centres during 2021.

We will continue to develop our **Women's Health Plan** which will underpin actions to tackle women's health inequalities by raising awareness around women's health and improving access to healthcare for women throughout life. Priority actions for the plan will be to ensure women have access to specialist menopause services for advice and support on the diagnosis and management of menopause; improve access for women to appropriate support, speedy diagnosis and best treatment for endometriosis; improving access to information for girls and women on menstrual health and management options; improve access to abortion and contraception services; ensure rapid and easily accessible postnatal contraception; and reduce inequalities in health outcomes for women's general health, including work on cardiac disease. We will also continue to work to delivered improved services for women who have suffered complications as a result of transvaginal mesh.



We remain committed to introducing a high-quality and clinically-safe thrombectomy service in Scotland to ensure the best treatment for patients with severe stroke, and to reduce their risk of long-term disability. The pilot of the North of Scotland Thrombectomy service will commence in autumn 2020, with a fully operational service in Tayside anticipated by 2023. The Queen Elizabeth campus will provide a 'hub' thrombectomy service for the West of Scotland, and NHS Lothian will provide a thrombectomy service on the Little France site by 2023.

However, the reality is that COVID-19 is likely to be with us for some time to come and it will continue to bring significant operational challenges. We have made significant progress in reducing waiting times over the last few years but we know that progress has been interrupted by the pandemic and we have seen a significant increase in the numbers of patients waiting for routine appointments and treatments. We will tackle that challenge with vigour and on the basis of clinical priorities, drawing upon guidance jointly developed by the surgical Royal Colleges across the UK. In doing so we will ensure that available capacity is used to treat safely those in most urgent clinical need and that, as far as is practical, this is done consistently across the country. However, the challenge of addressing the increases in waiting times for routine treatments and appointments will be one we will face for some time to come.



Infection Prevention and Control was a key issue pre-COVID-19 and the experience of NHS Boards in dealing with COVID-19 has reinforced how fundamentally important it is. As well as learning from experiences with COVID-19, lessons about the design and build of healthcare facilities and infection prevention and control are being learnt from the Independent Review of the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. This is informing the early work of the new national body to strengthen infection prevention and control in the built environment which will be established in spring 2021.

Resumption and redesign of cancer services

Cancer services will remain a key priority. The National Cancer Recovery Group is providing oversight of cancer services in Scotland, including promoting the framework for recovery of cancer surgery to assure patients of consistent prioritisation within the NHS. We will continue to create and promote, where appropriate, national approaches to diagnosis and treatment, ensuring patients have equitable access across Scotland. The **national cancer recovery plan** to be published in the Autumn will drive all of this activity.

Scotland's adult national screening programmes, which include breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening, as well as screening for Diabetic Retinopathy and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm, are now resuming following the temporary pause to the programmes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The programmes are restarting in a phased, careful and prioritised way, in line with the recommendations of the Scottish Screening Committee. The safety of screening participants and staff will be an overarching consideration throughout the stages of fully resuming screening services.

We will continue to prioritise early detection of cancers through the development of **Early Diagnostic Centres**, where patients can have multiple diagnostic tests at one appointment, rather than requiring repeat visits for different tests.

Recognising the public health drivers of smoking and lung cancer, the Scottish Government is committed to increasing early detection rates of lung cancer, and through our Detect Cancer Early initiative the proportion of lung cancer diagnoses at the earliest stage have gone up by 36%, and more in the most deprived areas. A number of areas of work are underway to ensure Scotland contributes to the emerging evidence base. As part of this, **Urgent Suspicion of Lung Cancer Guidance** has been published to support GPs in decision-making when checking patients with symptoms similar to COVID-19. We will continue to explore the best options for possible further actions to tackle lung cancer that both match our unique circumstances in Scotland and avoid creating further health disparities. We will also launch a new lung cancer public awareness campaign through our **Detect Cancer Early** programme.

We will seek to permanently embed some of the positive impacts of the National Cancer Medicines Advisory group, which has approved 19 new options for treatment for people with cancer using new rapid decision making processes. A cancer clinical trials subgroup will be established to accelerate progress on the restarting of clinical trials, ensuring these often final treatment options for patients are maximised and that we continue to make leading contributions to clinical research internationally.

Chronic pain services

We recognise that persistent pain can have a really significant impact on quality of life. We will publish the **Recovery Framework for Pain Management Services** which sets out the clear expectation for prioritisation of urgent care needs for pain management, taking account of the impact of delays on people's quality of life and we will work with Health Boards to support the safe and rapid remobilisation of pain management services. We are also currently exploring the potential for Health Boards to utilise additional regional and national capacity for delivery of pain management procedures. In addition, the format and remit of the National Advisory Committee for Chronic Pain is urgently being reviewed to ensure there is improved oversight and support of chronic pain service remobilisation and improvement.

We will work with local, regional and national stakeholders, including patient groups, to develop the current Scottish Service Model for Chronic Pain and to publish a **new Framework for Chronic Pain Service Delivery in 2021**. This will involve agreeing pain management pathways that are sustainable, improve health outcomes and minimise harmful variation. These will build on the value of self-management and reduce long-term reliance on specialist services and treatments that demonstrate limited health outcomes. We will also publish revised Opioid Prescribing Guidance for Chronic Pain. This will provide tools to support appropriate prescribing and review of opioids, with practical advice about reducing or stopping opioids completely.

Digital access to care

In responding to COVID-19, healthcare services have moved quickly and innovatively to ensure better access to flexible and digital health support. For individuals, this has increased choice and flexibility. For services, it has eased pressures, freeing up time and capacity for services which cannot be performed digitally. We will now, with COSLA, look to **refresh our digital health & care strategy** and create **a dedicated data strategy for health & social care** for the first time.

Early on in the COVID-19 outbreak the video health consulting service 'Near Me' was scaled up. We doubled funding to £1.2 million, increasing the service's capacity, trained more than 7,000 people, and supported 650 GP practices in its use. This saw Near Me video consultations go from 336 in the week before the scale-up to almost 17,000 in the last week of June. It has been very popular, with a patient survey saying 98% would use the service again.

While video consultations are not for everyone or every clinical situation, the benefits are significant. Near Me provides more patient choice, reduces travel for patients and clinicians, and has economic benefits such as reducing the need for time off work. **We will now move to a position of Near Me as the default option where that is right for a person and they are happy to use the service**, with the aim that all health and care consultations are provided by Near Me or telephone whenever clinically appropriate. **We will also develop its use in social care**, with an initial priority on use in care homes. This will be taken forward as part of a wider Digital in Care Homes Action Plan, to facilitate adoption of digital approaches in care homes for residents, staff and families.

**More than
16,000
Near Me
video health
consultations
per week**



For greater remote support for areas such as recovery, rehabilitation, falls and ongoing management of conditions, we will build on our previous work on home and mobile health monitoring and telecare. This will include the **roll-out of a new digital monitoring solution to support people who are dealing with a diagnosis of and the longer term effects of COVID-19**, offering access to online support and information whilst also allowing the patient to be able to feed in important information on their condition from home and at a time that suits them.

In partnership with NHS Health Boards we will **expand Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (cCBT)** service provision by increasing the number of treatment options available from 1 to 12 through the introduction of a new cCBT platform. By October 2020 cCBT will be deployed at scale without limitation on treatment numbers while rapidly increasing treatment choice to include anxiety disorders such as social and health anxiety. We will also **support the development of internet enabled CBT (ieCBT)**, a therapist-led treatment which provides easy access to evidenced-based CBT for those people experiencing common mental health problems. **Together, these services will support at a minimum a further 10,000 people – with the potential to support 30,000 people – to access therapy.** It will increase service provision in those areas of Scotland where the identified need is the greatest as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, and is particularly suited for use in remote and rural areas.

Enabling up to
30,000
people to access
digital Cognitive
Behavioural Therapy



The right care, in the right place, at the right time Urgent and Emergency care

To protect the public, patients and our NHS staff we will **redesign our Accident and Emergency** services. As we move towards winter it is essential that we minimise overcrowding in Emergency Departments so hospitals can continue to adhere to physical distancing guidelines and provide safe and effective care. By the winter, we will have implemented the first phase of our reform of urgent care for the over one million patients each year who attend A&E or minor injury units.

Clearly, those who have a health emergency or life-threatening illness require treatment as quickly as possible, and access to emergency care is unchanged. However, from previous research and our experience of changes to emergency care during the pandemic it is anticipated around 20% of people could be supported to access more appropriate provision of care that would better meet their health needs without a trip to A&E.

A new 24/7 service, operated by NHS24 on 111, will encourage people who are not in need of immediate emergency treatment to get a clinical assessment by phone prior to travelling to A&E.

Where a further clinical consultation is required, NHS24 will make a direct referral to a clinician who could, if appropriate, offer a telephone or digital consultation in the first instance. However, if someone does need to be seen in person this will be arranged as safely as possible at an Emergency Department or a department that best suits the patient's care needs. Using a fast booking system, departments will know to expect the person and work to avoid unnecessary delays. This new system will aim to provide care as close to home as possible, avoid long waits in crowded emergency rooms and keep patients and staff as safe as possible.

This will ensure that patients get the right care, in the right place, with the minimum amount of time spent in hospital waiting areas. Our aim is also to strengthen community health services and provide as much care closer to home as is possible.

We will ensure that services from across our health, justice and social care systems are brought together to focus on the needs of any person experiencing distress, particularly those with multiple, complex needs. Our direction of travel is that people in distress with complex needs who find our various systems difficult to access will be quickly identified and supported by a clearer referral pathway to the intervention that they need. We will **explore the adoption of a model of support akin to the COVID-19 Hubs used during the pandemic** – an immediate and multidisciplinary response, triaging and navigating pathways for appropriate and compassionate care.

Community services and COVID-19

Community health services are the cornerstone of the NHS. They have played a vital part in our response to COVID-19. COVID-19 Hubs have been established across the country to support people with symptoms of the virus. NHS 24 provided advice and were able to encourage people to self-isolate but also to direct people to treatment and support to those who needed it if the virus progressed, whether via virtual appointments or face-to-face assessments within their community. Between 23 March and 12 August 130,379 patients received a consultation through the Hubs and assessment centres.

With autumn and winter arriving we are expecting more people to experience cold and flu like conditions often with a fever or cough that will be indistinguishable from COVID-19 symptoms. **We will therefore bolster these community services as part of our redesign of unscheduled care.**

Delivering our Community Health Service

Our **Pharmacy First** Scotland service was launched on 29 July, replacing the Minor Ailments Services for treatment for conditions such as coughs, earache and cold sores along with clinical conditions such as Urinary Tract Infections. This extended service was delivered during our response to the pandemic, and means everyone registered with a GP practice in Scotland, including working-age people, could access it.

Additional common clinical conditions will be added to the Pharmacy First service during 2020-21 to support remobilisation of the NHS. All community pharmacists can now access Emergency Care Summary, allowing them to see all the medication that the patient has been prescribed.

Our ongoing work with GPs to reform primary care continues, and at the heart of our reforms of General Practice is ensuring that the full range of primary care health professionals are available to support people – whether that be a physiotherapist to deal with a musculoskeletal issue or a community paramedic if a home visit is required. If patients need a wound dressed, blood taken or a routine check to monitor a long-term condition, they will be referred by the appropriate healthcare professional to a community treatment centre. These networks of support were being rolled out prior to the pandemic and we will now accelerate efforts to develop a nationwide network to help patients manage their conditions close to home.

To mitigate against the impact of inequalities, we will continue our recruitment of 250 community link workers by the end of this Parliament as part of **our GP Contract commitment to deliver multi-disciplinary teams in the community**. Link workers are key in helping patients navigate and engage with wider services or assisting patients who need support. They often serve

socio-economically deprived communities. Primary care is the first port of call for many mental health issues and we are also recruiting mental health workers across primary and community settings. **In addition we will progress our commitment to recruit 800 mental health workers to key settings, including to GP practices, and continue as part of our discussions on the GP contract to look at further ways to support the recruitment of mental health workers in the community.**

We will **accelerate the reform programme for NHS dental services** and introduce a new model of preventive oral health care for adult patients. Patients will receive a comprehensive assessment of their oral health, including gums, tooth decay and soft tissues, and along with lifestyle risk factors such as smoking and alcohol, will receive an appropriate treatment plan. The intervention could be either preventive, self-care or restorative.

We will **accelerate the reform programme for NHS eye care services**, including continuing to implement the recommendations of the Community Eyecare Services Review. This will enable more care to be delivered safely in the community, closer to people's homes and includes funding to support an additional 50 optometrists to train as independent prescribing optometrists. Independent prescribing optometrists can safely manage more eye conditions within the community without the need for a patient to attend the hospital eye service.

Community optometrists have a vital role to play in supporting patients with long-term eye conditions and additional funding being provided will mean more care can be provided by local opticians. The aim is that community optometrists will deliver 50,000 appointments for lower risk hospital ophthalmology patients. This is supported by a £3 million investment.

A fundamental independent review of adult social care by January 2021



Rethinking social Care

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on all of Scotland's public services, but we know that at points this has been most keenly felt in our social care and support sector. Those services and staff have responded heroically to the challenges they have faced as they care for some of our most at-risk people, often within a person's own home. At the same time, we have seen more people taking on roles as unpaid carers— caring for friends, family, and loved ones, and further adding to their own personal pressures at a time of global crisis.

During the pandemic, we put in place a number of interim measures to support the social care and support system. This includes £100 million of funding to meet any additional costs of COVID-19 and support the sustainability and resilience of the sector. We have also put in place strengthened clinical oversight of Scotland's care homes to ensure clarity and consistency across the country about the role of care homes, Health Boards and local authorities in helping to keep residents safe.

As we move forward, we will ensure that people using social care services are provided with the best possible care. We owe it to them to acknowledge the challenges that social care has faced, learn from them, and reconsider the most effective model for the future. **We will immediately establish a comprehensive and fundamental independent review of adult social care, which will report by January 2021.** This will consider changes required to achieve the highest attainable standard of support for the independence and wellbeing of people who use adult social care support.

The aim of the review will be to recommend improvements to adult social care in Scotland, focused on the outcomes achieved by and with people who use services, their carers and families, and the experience of people who work in adult social care. The review will take a human-rights based approach with a particular but not exclusive focus on the views of those with lived experience, about what needs to change to make real and lasting improvements. Using the powers that are available to the Scottish Parliament this will set out how adult social care can be reformed to deliver a national approach to care and support services. It will include consideration of a national care service.

Ahead of that independent review reporting, a new stakeholder group will govern our approach to adult social care recovery and remobilisation as we move through and out of the COVID-19 pandemic period. The group will provide input to the Health and Social Care Mobilisation and Recovery Group. It will also have oversight of the support and reform of social care services in the immediate term, not least where those needed to be paused as we responded to the immediate requirements of COVID-19.

We will also take forward immediate improvements, working to:

- Set standards for how adult social care assessments and allocation of resources are carried out so that people accessing support are fully involved in decision making and experience greater consistency and transparency
- Complete a review of care services definitions. Developing new definitions for registered services and care roles will enable social care support services and workers to be more flexible and responsive to people's needs, to work more autonomously, and to work with others across professions
- Work with Integration Authorities and Local Authorities to ensure planning and purchasing of social care support is focused on flexible and person centred support

Within social care, we cannot forget that a significant element is delivered by unpaid carers who play an immense and vital role in supporting the people they care for. Quite simply, our health and social care systems would be unsustainable without that support, and we could not have got through the pandemic without them.

As a result of lockdown, unpaid carers have had to take on additional responsibilities, including balancing the challenges of home working and increased caring responsibilities, often without the same support which would have previously been available to them. Emerging research suggests there may be an additional 400,000 people undertaking unpaid care as a result of COVID-19. The Scottish Government made a one-off Coronavirus Carer's Allowance Supplement payment of £230. This was in addition to the regular six monthly Carer's Allowance Supplement, benefitting around 83,000 of Scotland's lowest income carers with some of the most intense caring roles. This additional payment, together with the existing six-monthly Carers Allowance Supplement, will mean that eligible carers in Scotland in receipt of Carer's Allowance will receive an additional £690 this year on top of their Carer's Allowance.

Support for carers is key to protecting their wellbeing. During the pandemic, we provided £500,000 to carers services to support them in working remotely. **We will work with these services to increase their capacity and ensure sharing of best practice and learning across settings**, together with an additional £11.6 million for ongoing implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act, provided to local authorities to deliver carers services this year, recognising the extra demands they may be under.

The pandemic has thrown into sharp focus the important role that unpaid carers play in our communities and we will continue to work to build on this public awareness to encourage those who are caring to take up the support that is available to them. **We will provide tailored information to support carers to help them identify themselves, access routes for support and know their rights under the Carers Act.** We will do this through a dedicated national campaign which will assist carers in identifying the support they need to look after their own health and wellbeing. Alongside publishing guidance to support the re-opening of adult day care services, we will continue to deliver

the £3 million voluntary-sector Short Breaks fund, offering time off and away for carers. As part of this fund, carers services in every local authority area are able to provide small grants to carers to support them to take a break in a way that they choose.

Safeguarding staff and patients

The work of health and social care staff throughout the pandemic has been immeasurable and invaluable. They have faced the same family and societal challenges that we all have whilst also delivering vital care in incredibly difficult circumstances. We owe them an immense debt of gratitude. We must ensure we provide the necessary support and protection they need. We cannot restore services and achieve the reforms we want to see without them.

Work is underway with the Social Care Fair Work group to develop and implement proposals to embed fair work principles that will lead to better terms and conditions and more rewarding roles for people working in social care, including care homes, care at home, housing and other support. An interim report is due in September 2020, with fully developed proposals by the end of 2020.



Issues related to pay, reward and recognition of NHS staff are discussed in partnership with unions. This year the majority of NHS Scotland staff including nurses, ancillary, administration and Allied Health Professionals have received a 2.95% pay rise as part of our three-year NHS Agenda for Change pay deal, which has delivered a minimum 9% pay increase for most staff over three years and over 27% for some staff still moving up their pay scale. NHS Scotland staff are the highest paid in the UK, and we will look to ensure that pay for NHS Scotland staff remains as fair as possible going forward.

As we are now in the last year of the three-year Agenda for Change pay deal, we are working closely with NHS unions to agree a timetable to secure a new pay deal for 2021-22. As part of this we are considering several options which take into account the efforts of NHS staff during the pandemic, and have not ruled out revisiting the final year of the current three-year pay deal as part of that 2021-22 deal.

We know that empowering staff at the front line and minimising bureaucracy was an important element in the success of the work across health and social care services in the early months of the pandemic response. We want to build on that approach as we remobilise, reform and improve services for the future.

We also know that many minority ethnic staff in health and care services felt anxious about protecting themselves and their families during the pandemic. To address this, we published occupational risk assessment guidance to help staff and managers consider the specific risk of COVID-19 in the workplace.

By the end of 2020 we will establish a national race equality network to produce an action plan with annual progress targets for health and social care employment at all levels of seniority in relation to minority ethnic groups. The national network will also review existing recruitment and promotion processes. Through our Leadership and Talent Management Programmes, we will increase the numbers of minority ethnic staff in senior and executive team roles. We will ensure new and existing minority ethnic staff networks in health and social care have a voice and influence to drive change, by introducing clear lines of governance and accountability, up to Board level. We will also work with staff networks and health and social care employers on a campaign to improve the accuracy of workforce ethnicity data.

As part of our efforts to improve support during the pandemic, we introduced a new, bespoke wellbeing hub for health and social care staff, and their families. This provides access to support, advice on self-care and personal resilience, and will help staff to recognise their own 'warning signs'. All health and social care workers in Scotland now have access to mental health support 24 hours a day, seven days a week through a new national helpline.

We will implement a number of services to support improved mental health among health and social care staff, backed initially by £5 million of funding. This includes **development of a Health and Social Care (HSC) Mental Health Network**, to enhance existing mental healthcare provision, and to supplement support which has already been instigated on behalf of health and social care staff locally and nationally. This will support staff working across public services as well as the independent and third sectors. We will also **expand and enhance the digital resources available to staff**, including deployment of large scale psychological interventions accessible via the National Wellbeing Hub.

£5 million to support the wellbeing of health and social care workers



We will **provide Boards with additional funding to support and further the work they have already undertaken to support and provide therapeutic intervention for health and social care staff** when it is needed. It will supplement the wide range of offerings that are being provided at a local level. In addition, we will implement a **Workforce Specialist Service**, the most comprehensive of its kind in the UK, which will provide confidential assessment and treatment for mental ill-health, offering specialism in the complexities of treating and supporting professionals who work in regulated environments, delivered through a multi-disciplinary team of mental health care providers, and supported by the continued delivery of digital wellbeing resources through the **National Wellbeing Hub** and the **National Wellbeing Helpline**.

For patients, our world-leading Scottish Patient Safety Programme (SPSP) continues to deliver significant improvements in the quality and safety of patient care. The SPSP launched in January 2008 as the first patient safety programme to be introduced nationally anywhere in the world. An initial aim was set to reduce hospital mortality by 15% by December 2012, extended to a 20% reduction by December 2015, and revised to secure a further 10% by quarter ending December 2018. We have met all of those goals, meaning tens of thousands fewer than expected deaths.

The ongoing success of the programme is testament to the hard work of staff across the country, improving the safety of healthcare wherever it is delivered, and ensuring better outcomes for some of our most vulnerable people. That is even more pressing at a time when our NHS is treating more people with more complex needs, and as we seek to recover from the current pandemic – we continue to learn and adapt, and will take action where necessary. There has been much to learn from the pandemic which will feed into the further work of the safety programme. This will include the development of the essentials of safe care across health and care services with a particular focus on care and support in the community and care homes.

In 2019, the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, chaired by Baroness Julia Cumberlege, set out a range of recommendations to improve patient safety, including the establishment of a Patient Safety Commissioner to be a national advocate for patients. We are considering the full recommendations made, but are **committed to the establishment of a Patient Safety Commissioner**.

Improvements to population health

COVID-19 has both exposed and exacerbated health inequalities in Scotland. The disproportionate harm caused by COVID-19 to older people, minority ethnic groups, people living in greatest deprivation, and those with obesity, diabetes and respiratory and cardiovascular disease has highlighted new vulnerabilities and underscored existing health inequalities.

Older people have been significantly impacted by the health, economic and social harms of the coronavirus pandemic. As we move forward, we will identify and work to reduce barriers that older people face when accessing health and social care services – no matter whether those services are provided by the NHS, local government, or third and independent sectors – to ensure they can live longer and healthier lives, and our communities benefit from the contributions older people can make.

The restrictions which have been put in place to stop the spread of the virus have also had a disproportionate impact on women, people in manual or lower-paid jobs, young people, and those without reliable access to the internet. We know that often health inequalities are driven by, and more deeply rooted in, wider social inequalities.

To tackle health inequalities and support those most in need we will take a cross-government approach to further developing our policies to support high-risk groups, including groups whose risks have become more evident in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will focus on our six public health priorities developed in partnership with COSLA as we take this programme of work forward:

- We live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities
- We flourish in our early years
- We have good mental wellbeing
- We reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- We have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all
- We eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active

In line with our cross Government focus, actions to tackle health inequalities can be found in our work on a national mission to create new jobs, good jobs and green jobs, and on promoting equality and helping our young people grasp their potential.



A core part of our work to reduce health inequalities must include how we support people and communities to make change that is important to them, threading community interventions, mutual aid and the voice of lived experience throughout our strategies and frameworks to ensure care and support are truly person-centred. We will strengthen existing work with partner organisations to support people to manage their own health conditions.

Health inequalities are often linked to poor health literacy, and we will work through the Health Literacy Action Plan to improve health literacy, ensuring that information about care and support is delivered by professionals in a way that is accessible and easy to understand.

A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active

We will work with Food Standards Scotland and Public Health Scotland to support a targeted approach to improve healthier eating for people with low incomes. We will continue to improve, expand and increase access to weight management services for people with, or at risk of,

Type 2 Diabetes, or with prediabetes, and extend access to weight management services to everyone living with obesity. We will raise awareness of weight management services and self-help tools in a non-stigmatising way.

We will progress legislation on Restricting Foods Promotions as soon as possible, having taken into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will include consideration of whether a more wide-ranging Bill is required. Work on the evidence base to underpin the proposals is continuing and we will engage with other administrations in the UK to explore the scope for the alignment of policy and legislation. We will build on the positive sport and physical activity behaviour changes we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as increased walking and cycling, and build wider community participation particularly within disadvantaged and under-represented communities. This will link with our work on communities, particularly our ambitions for 20 minute neighbourhoods and increased low carbon active travel, discussed in the next chapter.

We will work with **sportscotland** and Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport to rebuild membership and participation levels following the negative impacts of COVID-19. And we will work with the newly appointed Scottish Daily Mile Coordinator to encourage physical activity in a number of settings to support long-term behaviour change and specifically tackle the challenges around physical and mental health created by COVID-19.



We will establish a short life working group to examine social prescribing of physical activity – identify and communicate examples of best practice and co-produce resources for practitioners in the many roles which make up the overall system. **In addition we will support the delivery of health and care services to address inequalities** by building on examples of innovation and best practice developed to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on sexual health services, by developing a Recovery Framework for Sexual Health and Blood Borne Viruses. We will also learn from the successful approach already taken by NHS Tayside in collaboration with the University of Dundee, which has offered treatment for Hepatitis C to people who inject drugs without waiting until they joined a recovery programme or stopped using drugs. In late 2019, Tayside met the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) 2030 target for reducing prevalence of the virus 11 years early. We will work with the Scottish Health Protection Network, third sector and people who use services to understand how this approach can progress our ambition to eliminate Hepatitis C across Scotland by 2024. This work will be supported by investment from our Inclusive Scotland Fund.



We will review the focus of funding to tackle inequalities in the national population screening programmes. This will help address the impacts of COVID-19 on uptake of, and access to, screening as the programmes resume following a temporary pause due to the pandemic. We will also complete implementation of the Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Act 2019 – to introduce an optout system of organ and tissue donation – by the end of March 2021.

A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs

Scotland faces substantial public health challenges from the use of alcohol, tobacco and other substances. The way we address that must be through a public health response. In recognition of the importance of people in recovery from alcohol and drug problems being able to support each other, we have lifted certain COVID-19 restrictions to allow face-to-face peer support to take place under guidance. We also plan to further support the development of recovery communities across Scotland by providing £300,000 from our Inclusive Scotland Fund to the Scottish Recovery Consortium.

The Drug Deaths Taskforce has highlighted that stigma is one of the main factors preventing people from seeking treatment for drug problems. As a result a new strategy to tackle stigma has been published to encourage a more informed and compassionate approach towards people who use drugs and their families.

The taskforce has now announced the **Scottish Government funding for research and front-line services to help tackle the drug deaths public health emergency** over the next year, including £1 million for 10 research projects examining different approaches to the drugs death public emergency, and £3 million for Scotland's Alcohol and Drug Partnerships to deliver on the six evidence-based strategies set out by the Taskforce to reduce deaths and harms. The Scottish Government has also published the **Rights, Respect and Recovery Action Plan, setting out how we**

will respond to drugs and alcohol as public health issues first and foremost, and help people by treating wider problems such as housing and employment, and supporting their families.

During the lockdown and response to COVID-19, drug and alcohol support services as well as smoking cessation support have been maintained as priority services. We have secured a temporary arrangement with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) to enable non-drug treatment services who may be supporting people at risk of opioid overdose, such as hostels, to distribute Naloxone to people who use drugs, and their families and friends. We will be seeking to make this arrangement permanent, either through the UK Government making the required changes in legislation or by transferring the required powers to the Scottish Government, and will **consult on drug law reform** to support this. Alongside this we have asked Health Boards to include the prescribing of Buprenorphine (a long acting form of opiate substitute treatment) in prison settings to ensure continuity of treatment is available during the pandemic. A national protocol on Buprenorphine prescribing will be developed to enable greater treatment choice for people in both prison and community settings.

The pandemic has placed greater pressures on Scotland's residential rehabilitation services, so we are working with providers to identify ways to resolve these. We have established a short life working group, working with partners to consider the most appropriate longer-term approach to sustainable residential services based on the needs of those who would benefit from them. We want to ensure there is improved access and greater choice for people – enabling them to achieve their recovery. As a first step, during the pandemic we established a pathway from prison to residential rehabilitation to provide better continuity of care and guard against any transmission of COVID-19 in the event of their being a resurgence of the virus in prisons.

In the coming year we will also consult on restricting the advertising and promotion of alcohol and e-cigarettes, and legislating on e-cigarette restrictions and on smoking outside hospitals. Removing smoking from outside hospitals will further help protect staff and patients from the known dangers from second-hand smoking.

A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing

Loneliness, isolation, grief and psychological trauma have taken a toll on our mental health, particularly amongst the young and those who already experienced mental health issues before COVID-19. Whilst mental health services were one of the first to be remobilised following the easing of lockdown, we need to now scale up our support for mental health and wellbeing.

We're already made significant commitments to improving mental health. In 2017, we launched our ten year plan for mental health, backed by an initial £150 million over the course of this Parliament. In 2018, we committed to invest a further £250 million in mental health over the next five years to improve services for children, young people and adults.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone in Scotland. All of us have experienced uncertainty. Some of us will have been anxious or worried about our health, our family and friends, our jobs, and our way of life. Some of us will have been able to adjust to strange new circumstances. Others will have found the past few months much tougher. That's why we now need to go further, faster and ensure the right help and support is available for mental health when it's needed most.

Publish a Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan



Responding to the additional mental health needs associated with the pandemic

To set out how we will ensure our action on mental health recognises, learns from, and responds to the challenges of COVID-19, **we will publish a Mental Health Transition and Recovery Plan in autumn 2020.** We are working with communities and partners across Scotland and are being guided by the lessons we have learned so far. We will equip individuals, families and communities to support their own, and each other's, mental wellbeing. This will require approaches that go beyond the traditional remit of health. Our approach will consider everything that influences our mental health and wellbeing, considering the needs of different groups, and seeking to reduce inequalities across the Scottish population.

We know that there are those whose circumstances as a result of the pandemic are more likely to have experiences which contribute to poorer mental health, such as poverty, isolation, and loneliness.

We will work closely with these groups and stakeholders to best reflect their circumstances and needs in the plan.

We will ensure that our response focuses on the importance of meaningful employment, and seeks to mitigate the impacts on mental health of unemployment (or the risk of unemployment), redundancy and unhealthy workplace practices.

People who have been in the shielding category (and their families) are among those most likely to be affected adversely by the COVID-19 restrictions.

We will support them to maintain their mental wellbeing as they navigate the changing guidelines and supports put in place.

We recognise the pandemic has been challenging for carers, in particular young carers. **We will work with carer representative bodies to understand, and respond to, the mental health impacts of COVID-19 and lockdown on carers**, recognising in particular the disproportionate burden experienced by female carers.

As a long-term response to the COVID-19 crisis, evidence and expert opinion is telling us that a trauma-informed approach to recovery should be a key component of remobilisation. **We are expanding the National Trauma Training Programme by a further two years (to 2022/23)** to ensure that our workforce has the resources they need to help raise awareness of the different ways in which traumatic experiences and stress affects people.

Focusing on good mental wellbeing at a population level

We want the population of Scotland to be well informed about wellbeing, mental health and mental ill-health. This includes being aware of the importance of mental health on their lives, and those around them, what help is available, and the language we use to talk about it.

During the pandemic, we launched 'Clear Your Head', providing advice to support mental health and ensure people have the information they need to get the care they need. We will build on the success of this campaign by encouraging people to keep up any new active habits they may have started during the pandemic. We particularly want to see people getting outside and doing one thing, however big or small, to feel calmer and more in control.

Evidence indicates that the impacts of lockdown and COVID-19 have had more of a negative impact on women than on other groups. We will **engage with women's organisations in order to identify, and take action to support women and girls' mental health on an individual and structural level**. This will include work to support women and their families in the perinatal period through the Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Programme Board. We will also build on existing research into the causes of poorer mental health for teenage girls and take action to address the impact of social media and body image on young women. We'll also act to address the mental health impact on those living with domestic violence, abuse, coercive control and toxic masculinity. We also know that women tend to have greater carer responsibilities, which the pandemic has exacerbated. Our dedicated national campaign will ensure carers can identify the right support and advice they need for their own health and wellbeing.

Focusing on our response to distress

For years, our priority has been to improve responses to people who present in distress to emergency services but who do not need clinical intervention. In 2017, a pilot project was started in four areas (Lanarkshire, Borders, Inverness, and Aberdeen) called the Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) programme. DBI is a programme for people who turn to emergency services in emotional distress but do not need an emergency response. Frontline services, including Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, and primary care, assess the needs of the person and, if appropriate, refer them to a local third sector agency who will be in contact within 24 hours and offer support over a two week period to manage distress. Since its inception in June 2017, over 9,000 people have been referred to the DBI. During COVID-19, the DBI has now become nationwide through NHS 24. This was designed to help people in distress and the interim evaluation of the programme showed that the DBI approach is helping to save lives. However, at the moment it isn't reaching everyone and is limited to people over the age of 16. During the pandemic, we expanded the programme to include an NHS24 pathway, and this has already shown very positive results which it's vital we maintain. **We will now extend the DBI programme across Scotland, for a transitional period to 2024, at which point we expect it to be fully embedded by Boards.**

While we continue to scale up our digital offer, we know that a significant number of people experiencing mental health problems and distress visit Emergency Departments. They might not always be able to get the most appropriate help there, and their visits also increase waiting

times. Early into the pandemic, we asked Boards providing services for a larger number of people to put in place arrangements to redirect emergency mental health presentations away from Emergency Departments by establishing Mental Health Assessment Centres. The establishment of these centres has allowed quicker access to specialist services for those that need them and access to other interventions such as Distress Brief Intervention where appropriate. This has had a positive impact for people presenting with mental health needs, ensuring they receive the right support at the right time while also alleviating pressure on Emergency Departments. **We will work with Boards to retain, develop and support Mental Health Assessment Centres, as part of a broader approach to improving access to appropriate help as quickly as possible for people with mental health needs or distress.**

Suicide may become an even more pressing concern as the pandemic's longer-term impacts on the general population, the economy, and vulnerable groups are felt. We want to promote an evidence-based suicide prevention response, in partnership with the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG), to deliver interventions where they will make a difference. This work will continue to deliver the ten actions in the Suicide Prevention Plan. In response to the pandemic, we are working with Public Health Scotland to improve reporting on suicide rates. A new public awareness campaign will launch in September. We will also progress work to ensure support for suicidal crisis and to make recommendations to service providers. We will work with COSLA and other partners to develop a future longer-term suicide prevention strategy.

Supporting children and young people

Children and young people are not immune to the impacts of COVID-19, and many have faced unique challenges which may not be immediately evident and may be long-lasting. As we develop and deliver our mental health response to COVID-19, the voices and experiences of children, young people and their families will remain central. We will also ensure they are clearly and quickly signposted to the right help and support where it's needed. **We will enhance and build on digital support developed during lockdown, such as Aye Feel, and Parent Club.**



Schools can play a unique and important role in supporting children's health and wellbeing and education authorities have prioritised this both during the COVID-19 pandemic and in their plans for school return. In particular, they are continuing to implement previous commitments on **ensuring provision of school counsellors, and training for school staff in mental health and wellbeing.**

All education authorities have an implementation plan in place for providing school counsellors and many have accelerated the implementation of their plans in response to COVID-19. **We expect counsellors to be in place by the end of October 2020.** We will also increase the school nursing workforce by an additional 250 school nurses by

the end of 2022. We will continue to deliver on our 2018 Programme for Government commitment for more than 80 additional counsellors in colleges and universities over four years and are currently over two-thirds of the way to meeting that commitment.

In collaboration with the Mental Health in Schools Working Group, **we will develop and deliver a new mental health training and learning resource for all school staff.** This resource will include learning for school staff to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental wellbeing. To support schools and educational practitioners, **we will provide a framework on implementing, developing and evaluating a whole school approach** to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Delivering better mental health services

We are prioritising remobilising mental health services in our wider NHS remobilisation and we will support NHS Boards and their partners to recover stronger and better, building on the innovations and new service designs which have emerged as a response to COVID-19. This will require a continued focus on access, improvement and quality, and it will involve partners and services across the whole landscape. The involvement of patients and the mental health workforce will be critically important. Even before the current crisis, we recognised the urgency of ensuring that everyone who needs support can get access to appropriate services. We anticipate that demand for mental health services will grow in the coming months, due both to the pandemic and the likely impacts of the economic downturn. We have prioritised mental health services in our remobilisation of NHS services but we know that there is still more work to do. We will renew our efforts to drive down waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and psychological therapies, and to address rejected referrals.

Spend on CAMHS in Scotland has increased year-on-year since 2011 and by 182.7% since 2006. Despite this, we know that too few Boards are meeting their required targets and too many children and young people – and adults within psychological therapies – are waiting an unacceptably long time to start treatment. Our investments have helped to substantially increase the CAMHS and psychological therapies workforce but the impact on performance has been slower and less comprehensive than expected and needed.

We published a full progress update on the Audit of Rejected Referrals as part of the last Annual Report on the Mental Health Strategy. In response to the Audit's recommendations, we published a CAMHS Service Specification which outlines the provisions that children, young people and their families can expect from mental health services – regardless of where they live. We will be closely monitoring the Specification's implementation over the coming months and will work closely with Boards on their plans to remobilise CAMHS services. This will result in an agreed plan with each Health Board to meet the CAMHS standards

We want to remobilise services to meet the anticipated demand in a way that builds on the innovations and work undertaken at local level through the crisis. All Boards have been asked to set out their approach to the remobilisation, recovery and redesign of services for the remainder of this financial year in the next iteration of their remobilisation plans. **We will develop a recovery plan and programme for mental health services, including CAMHS, to support the recovery process.**

We know it is vitally important that people can access support close to home. We have provided £2 million for Local Authorities to support the introduction of new Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Services, with further funding to come. While the pandemic has had an impact on the planning and development of those services, we are working with local authorities to ensure they are ready to start supporting children, young people and their families as soon as possible. The first services will be in place by the end of the year with support available across all 32 local authorities in 2021.

As well as ensuring people are able to access services, we will also ensure services are of the highest standard and delivered safely – not least for those who may be most vulnerable or at-risk.

In 2020, we established a Quality and Safety Board for Mental Health Services in response to the Report of the Independent Inquiry into Mental Health Services in Tayside. An initial meeting was held in February 2020. **The Board will consider a wide range of issues that impact upon the quality and delivery of safe and effective services, including in inpatient and community settings.** It will also respond to the recommendation in the inquiry's report for a review of the assurance and scrutiny of mental health services across Scotland, including the powers of Healthcare Improvement Scotland and the Mental Welfare Commission.

There is no consistent adult ADHD diagnostic service across Scotland and many NHS Boards do not currently provide any adult ADHD diagnostic services, leading to inequality of access. A draft adult ADHD pathway has been developed in partnership with the National Autism Implementation Team and the Royal College of Psychiatrists and **we will engage with NHS Boards to consider the practical consequences of implementing the National Clinical Pathway for ADHD.**

We also know we need to improve the service response for people with personality disorders. Early work had started on ways to address this with the Royal College of Psychiatrists – this was paused due to the pandemic but will now be resumed at pace. As part of this work, we will **establish a Personality Disorder Managed Network** which will make recommendations on how to improve services and support a national roll-out of patient self-management training.

Finally, we will continue our national action on dementia prevention, which is backed by our world-leading government commitment on brain health. Earlier this year, we established Brain Health Scotland, hosted by Alzheimer Scotland – the first national programme of its kind. It will lead work to ensure that optimal brain health, and as a consequence dementia prevention, is central to our future public health strategies, research and clinical practice. As part of this, we will **develop and deliver the first Brain Health and Dementia Prevention Strategy**, to be published in 2021.



Chapter 3

PROMOTING EQUALITY AND HELPING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE GRASP THEIR POTENTIAL



This pandemic is primarily a public health emergency, but it has also taken – and will continue to take – a heavy toll on our society, communities and lives. The drive to tackle the damaging impacts of inequalities in our communities has come into even sharper focus.

This last five months has, however, seen an unparalleled collective response – a remarkable coming together of our society. Like countries around the world, and alongside the grief and loss felt by many, Scotland's experience of COVID-19 is also a story of personal sacrifices, public service and community spirit. That incredible commitment must be built on and be part of how we build, recover and renew as a society.

In the previous chapter we highlighted the magnificent contribution of our health and care staff. We owe the same debt of gratitude to other key workers, without whom our society could not and would not have continued to function. These include our teachers, police officers and emergency services staff, retail workers, bus drivers and refuse collectors, community workers and volunteers, and others whose daily work continued in order to keep society running and protect us from even greater harms. For those who shielded – businesses, public services, volunteers and third sector organisations were a lifeline providing invaluable support.

In response to COVID-19 we acted quickly to deliver significant new support at scale, in particular for low income families. We immediately empowered the public sector, third sector and community organisations to respond swiftly and without red tape, with an initial £350 million Communities funding package, which was announced on 18 March – a week ahead of lockdown. This investment more than doubled our Scottish Welfare Fund budget, making over £120 million available to support third sector and community efforts, and supporting investment of over £110 million to tackle food insecurity.

Active third sector organisations demonstrated during the pandemic the level and scale of services that they can provide and the crucial role they play in our communities. For thousands of people, volunteering during the pandemic provided a sense of purpose and community that may otherwise have been missing. We have a unique opportunity to build on that. A thriving third sector is vital to Scotland and as such it is an essential partner to Government.

Over £120 million has been committed in direct investment in the third sector during the crisis and we have taken an inclusive approach by ensuring it can benefit from other schemes such as the Business Support Fund. Our £25 million Third Sector Resilience Fund was launched quickly and effectively. It has saved over 15,000 jobs and saved the public purse up to £125 million. In response to the crisis, charities and third sector organisations worked tirelessly to ensure food, essential supplies and other vital services reached those most in need, as donation streams and other funding routes dried up overnight. Now more than ever these organisations deserve our support, ensuring they can continue to serve those communities during recovery. As we have set out earlier in this document, in the coming year we will provide new support to ensure the third sector has the necessary support to thrive and contribute to our social and economic recovery, and continue their excellent work seen throughout the crisis to support people and communities.

Supporting all of our work in this area is the **Social Renewal Advisory Board (SRAB)** which is helping us build on the policy responses seen during the pandemic.

The **Social Renewal Advisory Board** is advising the Scottish Government on how to build a stronger, fairer and more equal Scotland for the post-pandemic period. The Board aims to build on the shifts in policy and practice we saw in the immediate response to COVID-19 where, by working at pace and in partnership, we challenged traditional ways of working to deliver real change.

Proposals are being developed by a series of expert discussion groups known as 'policy circles'. The circles are focusing on Age and Disability, Addressing Low Income, Community-led Place Based Renewal, Cross Cutting Delivery, Financial Security, the Housing System, Access to Food, the Third Sector, and Communities and Volunteering.

Underpinning all the Board's work is a commitment to advancing equality and promoting and protecting human rights. COVID-19 has intensified many pre-existing inequalities, and it is crucial that the policies we are putting in place work for all of Scotland's people.

Initial recommendations from the Board's discussions are set out across the Programme for Government. The Board is now developing further proposals on social renewal and will set these out in full in a report later in the year.

Supporting children and families

We need to give our children and their families every chance to succeed. The social harms of COVID-19 reinforced the importance of tackling poverty and low income. The ambitious targets in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 provide us with a clear goal to reduce the numbers of children living in poverty in Scotland by 2023, and effectively eradicate child poverty by 2030.

A detailed four year programme of action to deliver on those targets was launched in 2018, backed by a £50 million Tackling Child Poverty Fund. In order to recover some of the ground lost to the COVID-19 response, we will focus even more intensely on child poverty as we recover.

Tackling poverty

We know that one of the key drivers of tackling child poverty is increasing family incomes, including through social security. Building a system based on dignity, fairness and respect that places clients at its heart, we established Social Security Scotland in 2018. Already, the Agency is successfully delivering eight benefits, four of which are new and the others more generous than the UK benefits they have replaced. These support low income families, young people entering employment, carers, and people facing a bereavement. In the coming year we expect to spend £3.3 billion in total on benefits, providing vital support to low income people and helping to mitigate the impact of UK Government welfare cuts.

In addition to the range of new devolved benefits being delivered by Social Security Scotland, we continue to support people on low incomes through the Scottish Welfare Fund delivered by local authorities. Since its establishment in 2013 this vital lifeline has paid out more than £230 million supporting over 680,000 people. In light of the coronavirus we have more than doubled the fund, distributing an additional £22 million to local authorities at the start of the pandemic, and retaining a further £23 million to be used where it is needed most. To help those struggling with housing costs, we also increased our funding for Discretionary Housing Payments, also delivered by local authorities, by £5 million. We are now increasing this even further by £3 million. That brings the budget for this crucial support for tenants to £80.6 million – including nearly £60 million to mitigate the UK Government's bedroom tax.

That is a significant investment, but we want to go even further in the use of our new powers. Chief among that is the **introduction of the Scottish Child Payment** – a new benefit to increase family incomes and reduce child poverty. It will pay £10 per week for each eligible child in a family, every four weeks. There will be no cap on the number of children that families can claim for and it will be uprated annually in line with inflation. It has rightly been hailed as a game-changer by leading anti-poverty charities.

We are introducing the Scottish Child Payment first for families with children under 6 in recognition of the fact that of all children in poverty, almost 60% live in a family where a child is under six years old. Before the pandemic, we estimated that could support up 170,000 children. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we know that more and more families will have had to rely on social safety nets, with an increase in people applying for qualifying benefits, such as Universal Credit. We will ensure everyone who is eligible is aware of their entitlement, and is able to receive the support they deserve.

Scottish Child Payment

applications from
November and first
payments from end
February 2021



Throughout the pandemic we have prioritised delivery of the Scottish Child Payment. Significant work, under incredible pressures, has meant that **we will aim to start taking applications for under 6s in November 2020 and for first payments to be made to eligible families from the end of February 2021.** Despite the delays and pressures caused by COVID-19, that is a delay of only two months to our original timetable. Together with the support already in place through the Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, this will offer families on low incomes over £5,200 of financial support by the time their first child turns six. Importantly, we will never place arbitrary limits on the number of children who can be supported and up to £4,900 is available for second and subsequent children.

Recognising the additional hardships that winter can bring, particularly with rising fuel costs, **we will also start making payments of our new Child Winter Heating Assistance in winter 2020**, subject to DWP providing the necessary data on time. This will provide families of the most severely disabled children with £200 per child to help with the cost of heating in the winter months, with approximately 16,000 children likely to qualify this year.

The Social Renewal Advisory Board made a series of recommendations on social security, which we are now responding to.

Recognising the importance of **maximising people's incomes** in tackling poverty and disadvantage, we will do more to promote benefit take up, including making a benefits eligibility checker available online. We will consider which benefits need specific attention and how partners and online content can help us strengthen our approach. We will also explore with COSLA how to embed **Scotland's Social Security principles and human rights-based approach** within the local authority level benefits and payments system.

We will work with COSLA to build on good practice in relation to **automation of local level benefits and payments** and to consider a national approach where possible. This ensures that people who are eligible for benefits receive the support they are entitled to. We will work with our partners to develop guidance and resources on best practice, and with the UK Government to make it easier to introduce automation for local-level benefits and payments – free school meals, school clothing grants and educational maintenance allowances – which are key to alleviating the impacts of child and family poverty and supporting attendance and learning within education.

Alongside increasing incomes through social security we are taking action to ensure access to vital resources, and supporting communities to respond to the immediate pressures families face. We have invested over £110 million in tackling food insecurity as a result of the pandemic. This has funded national initiatives like grocery box parcels for people shielding, and provided flexible investment for local authorities and third sector organisations to put in place coordinated responses to food insecurity at a local level. This includes almost £30 million to support the continued delivery of a free school meal or alternative provision during school closures and over the summer holidays. This has supported around 175,000 children and young people during a difficult time for them and their families.

The Social Renewal Advisory Board raised the issue of food insecurity in school holidays – a problem addressed during the pandemic by continuing to fund free school meal entitlements over the Easter and summer breaks. We will work with COSLA on what more can be done here, using the Board's final recommendations later in the year. The Board also focused on the need to strengthen **community food partnerships**: we recognise that coordinated partnership working in response to COVID-19 has brought together the strengths of different sectors, and we will work with the Board to consider how this can be developed further.

Tackling debt is another priority area, as the pandemic continues. We are making £2.4 million ring-fenced funding available for debt advice, focusing on innovative and inventive approaches. We are also working with AdviceUK to support smaller-scale, local projects run by its members across Scotland. Alongside the actions in our Debt Advice Routemap, we will support debt and advice organisations to develop a 'multi-channel' approach to advice with phone, online, face to face, and outside of working hours options.

Accessible and **affordable credit** is often key to managing money, particularly for those on low incomes. We will work with Carnegie UK Trust and the Affordable Credit Action Group to promote affordable credit, as one way for people to reduce unaffordable debt and arrears. We will consider what more we can do to support existing providers and explore alternative sources of help such as housing associations or employers, as recommended by the Social Renewal Advisory Board.

The best start in life

Getting it right for every child means recognising that life chances, and future attainment, start at birth. We are delivering a comprehensive package of support to ensure that is the best start. That underlines our investment and delivery of initiatives like Scotland's baby box – of which more than 47,000 were delivered in 2019. 93% of parents are taking up a baby box, and there is nearly 100% parent satisfaction with it. We are grateful to all those who continued to deliver the BabyBox during lockdown, at what was a very worrying time for new parents.

With the introduction of all three elements of the Best Start Grant, by the end of March 2020, more than 75,000 payments had been made to families on low incomes, with investment of £21 million in 2019-20. BSG takes provision for the first child from £500 under the UK Sure Start Maternity Grant up to a total of £1,100, over three payments. We do not put a cap on the number of children we help, so subsequent children, who receive nothing from the UK Government, receive up to a total of £800. Best Start Foods also provides a payment for healthy food of £17 every four weeks for any children between one and three years old and during pregnancy, and £34 for babies up to the age of one.

To further improve the support we provide in the early years, **we will continue to review and transform maternity and neonatal services over 5 years through the Best Start programme.**

Through this we will deliver person-centred care that reduces inequalities, keeps mother and baby together, provides choice and improves experience of care and clinical outcomes for the 50,000 pregnant women and their babies who use our services every year.



Providing the best start in life also forms a central part of our ambition to invest in high-quality early learning and childcare. We made a commitment in 2014 to deliver the most ambitious childcare offer anywhere in the UK – 1,140 funded hours for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. In March this year Audit Scotland confirmed we were on track to deliver. When the scale of the national emergency became clear, however, we recognised that with delays to the construction of nurseries and the training of some new staff, local authorities would not be able to meet the legal duty to deliver the expansion from this August. This decision weighs heavily on all of us – however it is now time to reset that commitment.



We are determined to deliver our commitment to the expansion of early learning and childcare, and will work with Local Government and providers to deliver on this as quickly and as safely as possible. Councils have continued to develop their offer even over the recent months, and in some parts of the country, they are able to provide 1,140 hours to eligible children this year. A date for full implementation of the expansion hours will be jointly agreed by Scottish Government and Local Government and an assessment of readiness provided by December 2020.

Childcare for school-age children is equally important, and has a significant part to play in supporting people into work and to secure better jobs with higher incomes. **We have committed to develop and deliver a framework for school age childcare during this Parliamentary term.** This will set out a bold vision for school age childcare in Scotland and the steps we will take to make it more accessible and affordable, using the responses to our 2019 consultation to consider what more the Scottish Government can do.

To support the framework, we will build on learning from our Access to Childcare fund, supported by £3 million from the Tackling Child Poverty Fund, which is helping community based projects across Scotland test new models of school age childcare for low income families. Successful models include St Mirin's Out of School Club in Glasgow which will work in partnership with their local primary school to make school age childcare more accessible and affordable for those families who need it most. This includes increased opening hours to test early morning and late evening sessions, subsidised costs for parents, and bringing childcare staff into the school to deliver play services to ensure effective transitions for children.

A safe return to schools

All children and young people will have experienced negative effects from being unable to attend school, and from living in a world restricted by physical distancing.

We know that the broader effects of the pandemic and lockdown have risked learning, friendships, safety, wellbeing and mental health. Our priority has been to lift restrictions on our children and young people as soon as it is safe to do so, including working with partners to ensure that school closures do not go on for a minute longer than necessary.

At the outset the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) – which brings together the Scottish Government, teachers’ representatives, parent bodies, local authorities and trades unions – agreed five guiding principles to ensure that the child is always placed at the centre of our considerations: **our approach must be Safe, Fair, Ethical, Clear and Realistic.**

We are now working alongside that group to take all possible steps to ensure that pupils, teachers and other school staff get the support they need to remain safe and feel comfortable in the school environment. The guidance and health mitigations we have developed, based on scientific advice, are designed to demonstrate to everyone affected that it is safe for schools to reopen subject to continued suppression of the virus, and that we safeguard the health and wellbeing of pupils, students and staff. This includes those who have been shielding or are more vulnerable due to factors such as ethnicity, pregnancy or an underlying health condition. The guidance that local authorities and schools have been asked to implement includes risk assessments, enhanced cleaning regimes, good hand and respiratory hygiene, ventilation, and use of PPE where appropriate. To complement this, we are providing up to £50 million to local authorities specifically to help cover additional costs associated with those requirements.



We have also implemented a series of measures under our enhanced surveillance and testing programme, including full application in schools of Test and Protect, clear protocols for outbreak management, and priority testing for all staff with symptoms. All schools have received a Sector Advice Card summarising the key measures to be taken in terms of prevention and response. Teachers, nursery and school staff can all access testing on demand if they are concerned they have been at risk from infection, even if they show no symptoms. Our surveillance measures will allow us to report regularly against key parameters and to make rapid adjustments in the light of evidence of developments on the ground.

While teachers, local authorities, parents and pupils have all worked together to ensure a safe and welcoming return to school, the CERG will now continue to meet regularly to monitor trends on the ground, consider the latest evidence, and update their advice as and when required. It will always keep issues such as face coverings and physical distancing under careful review. While we will never underestimate the challenges involved, feedback from schools and Local Authorities has been positive and we saw many examples across social media of happy, smiling pupils and staff returning to school.

Supporting learning and closing the attainment gap

We have heard clearly from young people that they were concerned about the impact of school closures. Education provides a fundamental mechanism for addressing inequality, poverty and to improve health and wellbeing; as the UNESCO supported International Commission on the Futures of Education highlights “massive efforts will be necessary to make sure the 2020s do not become a decade of lost opportunity”.

Our policies have already resulted in the highest level of education investment per person across the UK, and we also have more teachers per pupil than elsewhere. In addition, since the start of the pandemic, we have increased support for families to engage with learning at home. Education Scotland supported local authorities and teachers to ensure learning continues, including via Glow, our digital learning platform, as well as new national digital learning resources, launched ‘Scotland Learns’ with weekly support for practitioners and parents, and delivered a series of teacher webinars on topics such as digital literacy skills, evidencing learning using iPads, and getting the most out of Glow. Education Scotland will now strengthen its close working with e-Sgoil, widening access for learners to live lessons, providing timetabled online classes, and training additional teachers to provide online learning as part of a wider e-Learning National Offer.

e-Sgoil – which was originally created to offer greater learning opportunities for pupils in the Western Isles – can provide lessons across primary and secondary levels. Lesson provision from e-Sgoil will be available to all local authorities and schools, for example for groups of learners who need to self-isolate or if a school has to close. From early September it will also be offering a programme of Study Support for Senior Phase pupils to consolidate their learning. This provision will be delivered outwith the school day, to pupils in their homes. Weekly webinars covering approximately 20 certificated courses will be delivered over an initial eight-week period and e-Sgoil will continue to work with local authorities to identify further areas of need. This work builds on the success of the e-Sgoil national ‘lockdown’ offer – where over 3,000 young people from across the country participated in real-time e-Sgoil lessons from their homes. Further additions to the curriculum are also offered for the broad general education and senior phase from partner organisations such as Keep Scotland Beautiful, the Gaelic Book Council and Skills Development Scotland.

Underpinned by the hard work and commitment of our councils and teachers, our focus is now moving towards accelerating our education recovery mission and progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Our central mission remains to deliver excellence and equity across Scottish education, with an immediate emphasis on supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

In July we announced **£80 million of additional investment in education staff, sufficient for the recruitment of around 1,400 additional teachers and 200 support staff** this year. It is anticipated that these additional teachers will intensify support for individuals or groups of pupils who have significant gaps in their progress as a result of lockdown, supporting young people who are shielding, supporting small groups of learners who need more intense support and covering classes for teachers who are shielding. They also provide scope to alter class sizes to provide more teaching and learning, and to enable more physical distancing where this is challenging. They will also be vital in responding to any local flare-ups of the virus, which could necessitate implementation of contingency plans for blended learning for a period.



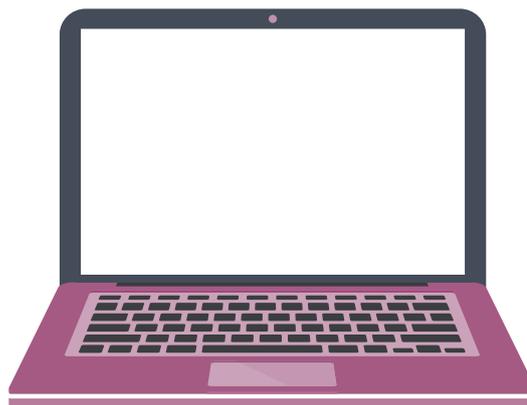
We recognise that disruption caused by the pandemic are impacting children from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly severely. We have encouraged local authorities and schools to target support where it is most needed, giving them **flexibility to redirect Attainment Scotland Funding to help mitigate the impacts of school closures on our most disadvantaged families**, and to make adjustments to existing plans to be delivered as schools return.

For the first time, **Pupil Equity Fund allocations of over £250 million were confirmed for two years** (2020/21 and 2021/22) benefitting 97% of schools and giving headteachers assistance in their planning and decision making. As well as taking total investment in the Scottish Attainment Challenge to over £750 million over the last five years, this also extends the programme for a further year beyond this Parliamentary term and provides invaluable long-term commitment. We will publish evidence of progress with our defining mission of closing the poverty-related attainment gap by March 2021. We will work with our partners, including our International Council of Education Advisors, to design the best approach to accelerating progress with closing the poverty-related attainment gap, through the next phase of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

The experience of lockdown shows that access to technology and digital capability is, and will remain, a fundamental aspect of education in Scotland. Despite pupils now being physically back at school, we are still committed to tackling digital exclusion. We are investing **£30 million as part of a huge digital boost** through provision of laptops for disadvantaged children and young people, which includes **£25 million to enable a**

rollout of digital devices to school pupils to enable them to study online, with an initial provision of approximately 25,000 Chromebooks. We expect that, in total, around 70,000 devices and 18,000 connectivity solutions will be provided to children and young people across the country in the coming weeks. We know that the effects of the pandemic will be long-lasting, and individual circumstances mean not every family will have had access to such technology, but we will ensure that no young person is left behind.

£30 million
to support digital
inclusion amongst
disadvantaged
children and
young people



In the event of any future disruption to schooling, for example due to the need for children to self-isolate, we will work with local government to ensure continuity of learning. This will mean that remote learning opportunities will be provided for children, using technology where appropriate, learning the lessons from the best practice which emerged during the national lockdown. Education Scotland will publish examples entitled 'What Scotland Learned' to inform approaches to remote learning in the future if required. Education Scotland Attainment Advisers continue to support local authorities and schools as they support the learning of children and young people from the most deprived backgrounds.

Alongside a focus on ensuring continuity of learning, there must be a continued focus on using the flexibility that Scotland's curriculum – *Curriculum for Excellence* – provides in order to best meet the diverse needs of individual learners during the recovery phase. Guidance has already been produced by the CERG to support teachers and other professional practitioners in preparing the curriculum offer for the recovery phase, with an emphasis on prioritising the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, practitioners and families. The CERG will continue to review and update key guidance for schools, including guidance on ensuring continuity in learning and on the curriculum during the recovery period.

A longer term strategy will be required to help address the impact the pandemic has had on some of the most vulnerable children and families. The **implementation of an Equity Audit will deepen our understanding of the impact of on children from disadvantaged backgrounds**, and set clear areas of focus for accelerating recovery.

We will continue to support families with the cost of the school day, and in line with the Tackling Child Poverty Action Plan, will review the level of school clothing grant with local government to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of families.

Alongside this, we will continue to improve support for pupils through implementation of the recommendations of **Angela Morgan's independently Chaired review of additional support for learning**, working with our partners to deliver key actions to address the recommendations in the coming year and in the longer term. We also know that our education system must support everyone to reach their full potential and it is vital the curriculum is as diverse as the young people who learn in our schools. We are continuing to progress delivery of the world-leading recommendations on LGBT Inclusive Education across the curriculum in order to improve the learning environment for all children and young people.

We are also mindful of the impact of the pandemic on teachers and other staff in schools and are committed to helping them to deliver excellent education for all learners. Accordingly we will bring forward new professional learning focused on wellbeing and ensure more coaching opportunities are created for a range of staff. **We will develop and deliver a new mental health training and learning resource for all school staff**. This will build upon our work to support learning for school staff to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental wellbeing. We will also create new support for new teachers who have just completed their probation year allowing them to build on their existing skills.



Our experience during COVID-19 school closures also reinforced the vital role played by community learning and development in supporting young people and families – a role that will become ever more important in our recovery year. As part of our support to the sector **we will allocate £3 million to a new Youth Work for Education Recovery Fund**, supporting young people to engage with youth work activities that build their confidence and skills, support their health and well-being, and address the poverty-related attainment gap.

Recognising the achievements of young people

Most pressingly, COVID-19 meant it was not safe to hold the 2020 SQA Exam Diet and it had to be cancelled for the first time in history. In these unprecedented circumstances difficult decisions had to be made. We have acknowledged that we did not get all of these right for all of our young people, and wholeheartedly apologise to those affected.

We are determined to learn all we can from the experience, and recognise the broader debate that exists over the future of assessment and qualifications in Scotland. **To ensure that we best recognise the achievements of Scotland's young people in the future we have already appointed a leading education expert to carry out an independent review of the handling of awarding of qualifications in 2020.** In addition, we will ensure a broader independent review of the Scottish approach to assessment and qualifications takes place which will consider best practice globally and provides recommendations. To ensure no young person loses out on a chance of a university place, we will also provide additional funded places.

Enhancing the school estate

By the end of 2020 the remaining projects which form part of the £1.8 billion Scotland's Schools for the Future programme will be completed and open to pupils. In total, this programme has delivered 117 new schools projects and benefited around 60,000 pupils since it was established in 2009.

We expect to announce a second phase of new schools projects by the end of 2020 as part of the new £1 billion Learning Estate Investment Programme. A first phase of 11 projects was announced in September 2019 and those projects are expected to be complete for the start of the new term in August 2024.

Higher Education

Our work to close the attainment gap and ensure a better future for all young people does not stop at the school gates – it must extend to every level of education.

We will always protect free education ensuring that opportunities for our young people are based on the ability to learn, not the ability to pay – but we know that the availability of free education by itself cannot overcome other inequalities. We are continuing to work with colleges, universities, and others to implement the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Widening Access, ensuring that, **by 2030, admissions to university reflects our population with at least 20 per cent of university entrants coming from our 20 per cent most deprived communities.** An interim target of 16 per cent by 2021 has been met, but progress must be quicker, and across all of our universities. We will build on successful work to scale up outreach activities and reforming admissions to reflect the potential a young person may have, not just their prior attainment. We will continue to develop a School Engagement Framework to support pupils into the right choices, whether that is a modern apprenticeship, college, university, or employment.



To deliver fair access and ensure students can stay in education, we are investing a record amount in student support. As well as benefiting from free tuition, Scottish students have the lowest average loan debt in the UK, and further education students have access to the UK's most generous bursary. But we want to make sure that all students, especially those in our most deprived communities, are provided with the financial support they need to succeed. We have been continuing to work to implement the Independent Review of Student Support and have taken significant steps to further improve support – but we also know that the pandemic has changed life for everyone, including students who will not be immune from the wider personal, social and economic impacts. To support our response, we need the right data. **We will carry out a student income and expenditure survey in Scotland,** and look at the feasibility of doing so in collaboration with the UK and Welsh Governments. This will provide a detailed picture of student finances, and how it affects their experiences of higher education.

We know that COVID-19 has increased the poverty gap for Scotland's most marginalised adults and young people, and reinforced that we must do more to support vulnerable young people and adults with few or no qualifications, including those for whom English is not a first language. **We will develop a lifelong learning strategy that ensures youth and adult learning are integrated within our wider education and skills system.** Implementation of the strategy would seek to increase provision for vulnerable adults by building on existing and creating new learning partnerships between colleges, the Open University and community based organisations.

Scotland's universities are one of our most precious resources. Our world renowned institutions and research promote Scotland's place in the world, play a leading role in economic recovery, and provide the highly skilled workforce of the future. To enable them to concentrate on planning the long-term future of a sector so vital to the Scottish economy, we provided a one-off £75 million increase in funding for Scotland's universities to help them respond to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have published a Higher and Further Education Financial Sustainability action plan, outlining the practical steps we are taking to protect institutions, promote tertiary education in Scotland and prioritise student wellbeing. This came with a further £10 million for estates development, £5 million emergency student funds across further and higher education, early access to £11.4 million of higher education hardship funds, and £4.7 million for students facing hardship to access equipment to study on-line.

COVID-19 now represents a double threat, adding to the significant risk we know Brexit will present. Scottish universities receive an average of 8% of their total research funding from the EU. The majority of this comes from Horizon 2020 – since 2014, this has provided more than €536 million to Scottish institutions. But the effects of Brexit will run deeper than just financial. EU and international students bring significant economic, social and cultural benefits to our campuses and communities. Membership of shared programmes like Erasmus+ also enables over 2,000 Scottish students to benefit from learning and living in another country during their studies. We have continued to press UK Government to deliver a comprehensive package of support to counter those twin threats, taking into account the particular interests of Scotland's universities.

Keeping the Promise

Taken together, our work to provide the best start in life, invest in social protection, and drive up attainment at all levels of education is about ensuring **a safe future for all**, where all our infants, children, and young people can grasp their potential. That must start with looking at those who are most vulnerable, ensuring they are protected from harm, and empowered to succeed. Nowhere is that more true, and perhaps no group more in need of protection and nurturing, than care experienced young people. As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have granted £1.5 million to key partner organisations **to help provide direct support to looked-after children and young people**, as well as some of Scotland's most vulnerable families. That is a strong foundation, but we have made a promise which we will not allow the crisis to threaten.



The recent Independent Care Review was one of the most substantial, ambitious, and necessary reviews in the history of the Scottish Parliament. It delivered a powerfully simple message: **care must have love and nurture at its heart**. Keeping The Promise it asked us to make will mean all children will grow up loved, safe and respected so they can realise their full potential. Where possible, families will be supported to stay together, and provided the support they need to thrive. When that is not possible, the relationships that matter to children and young people – particularly with brothers and sisters – will be protected. And the priority when an infant, child or young person needs our care must be the provision of stable, safe, secure, loving homes that allow them to experience the normal joys and challenges of growing up. To make this a reality, we are taking three important steps.

- **We have acknowledged the role Scottish Government plays in the design and delivery of the current system and committed to create a structure that can facilitate the re-design of whole system approaches to care and support.** This begins with embedding the commitments already made to care experienced people into policy and delivery, with significant and intensive work across the entirety of government policy
- **An Oversight Board is being established to hold us to account**, with Fiona Duncan – Chair of the Care Review – appointed to lead it. At least half of the members of the Oversight Board will be care experienced, because we cannot build a new approach without having those with lived experience at the heart of accountability
- We are supporting the establishment of a dedicated, independent Promise Team, including investing **£4 million in the Promise Partnership which will help embed and scale-up holistic family support**. This will promote early intervention and prevention, driven by the needs of, and designed with, children, young people and their families. We will also support and develop the workforce so that they have the opportunity to keep The Promise

As part of our work to deliver better care, the Scottish Government will better support **kinship carers**, establishing a kinship collaborative and continuing to work with partners to take forward the recommendations of the National Review of Foster, Kinship and Adoption Care Allowances. We will support key partners to implement the recovery plan for the **Children’s Hearing System** which reduces all reliance on emergency legislation and provides a full return to steady state by September 2021. We will draw on the learning from the national and local responses to the pandemic, and conclusions of the Care Review to further develop our approach to child protection. We will consult on and publish revised **National Guidance for Child Protection** and develop a new approach to reviewing significant protection cases by April 2021.

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As well as supporting care experienced people today, we must face up to the past when we failed to ensure that children in our care grew up loved, safe and respected. The **Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Bill** will legislate for a redress scheme to provide tangible recognition, acknowledgement, and apology of harm as a result of historical child abuse in residential care settings in Scotland. An advance scheme has already provided more than 450 people who are elderly or terminally ill with a payment of £10,000 each.

Our work to deliver a safe future for all also delivers one of the most ambitious pieces of legislation since devolution. **The UNCRC Bill will fully and directly incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children into Scots law**, to the maximum extent of the Scottish Parliament's powers, before the end of this Parliament. Public authorities, including the Scottish Ministers, will be under a statutory duty not to act incompatibly with the UNCRC requirements as set out in the Bill. If they do, children, young people and their representatives can use the courts to enforce their rights. This will deliver a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services.

The UNCRC Incorporation Bill

will protect the rights
of children and young
people in Scotland



Better housing

Ensuring everyone has access to a safe, warm and affordable place to call home is at the heart of our ambition for a Fairer Scotland – creating jobs, tackling social and health inequalities, and creating strong, sustainable communities.

More social housing with access to outside space



At the start of this Parliamentary term we embarked on the single biggest investment and delivery of affordable housing since devolution, committing to 50,000 affordable homes, with at least 35,000 for social rent. By the end of March 2020, 34,791 affordable homes had been delivered, over 23,000 of which were for social rent. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the construction industry, but with 46,000 home approvals in the four years to end March 2020, we were on track to deliver this ambitious commitment. We are working with partners across the housing sector to deliver the remainder of these homes as quickly as it is safe to do so. We have also helped those who aspire

to home ownership achieve it, with over 35,000 households supported through our existing shared equity schemes since 2007, the majority of whom are under 35. We are now helping even more people through our pilot First Time Buyers Fund which we will evaluate later this year.

Looking ahead, we have asked people across Scotland to help us set out a vision for how we want our homes and communities to look in 2040 and what we need to do to get there. We will use this to **set out a 20-year plan to deliver good quality, energy efficient, zero carbon housing with access to outdoor space, transport links, digital connectivity and community services.** The Housing to 2040 Vision and Principles and Route Map will be published later this year. The work of the Social Renewal Advisory Board will help ensure this route map reflects our learning from the experience of the pandemic about the importance of house, home and community and safe housing for all. We also expect the Social Renewal Advisory Board to provide a view on the role of rent control or rent capping in our future housing policy.

Investment in housing will make a crucial contribution to Scotland's recovery. Building on funding of over £3 billion over the current parliament, we have committed £300 million of interim funding for 2021-22, ensuring that affordable homes continue to be delivered beyond this current parliamentary term. Our current investment in housing will, on average, leverage economic output in the region of £1.4 billion per year and support around 10,000 to 12,000 jobs per year in the construction and related industries in Scotland. As set out in our action to boost the energy and heat efficiency of buildings, it also produces significant social and environmental benefits. With 25% of Scotland's emissions coming from heating buildings, making homes greener will make a significant contribution towards net zero. It helps tackle fuel poverty head on by reducing energy bills. And it produces significant improvements in health and wellbeing.

To support our ambitions, we will encourage innovation, supporting the sector to embrace new ways of working to speed up the delivery of homes, improve quality, reduce waste and increase productivity. That also requires developing the skill sets required for the future. We welcomed the publication of Professor Sean Smith's report on housing construction skills which remain a priority area. We have accepted the majority of the recommendations to government, and will implement them with the support of partners. Before Spring 2021, we will also **develop and agree an accord between government and the construction industry.**

Housing is much more than just bricks and mortar – it is somewhere that should enhance people's sense of wellbeing and promote better physical and mental health. Now, our homes will also be somewhere many of us work from. **We will improve the quality of all Scottish Government grant funded homes, with a specific focus on social homes, by increasing the conditionality of public investment.** We will develop guidance this year, to target three issues of quality:

- Carbon: Greater use of **offsite construction** for new social housing. This has the potential to speed up delivery of affordable homes, reduce waste and achieve the quality of construction needed to support zero emissions homes, and it offers opportunities to improve productivity and attract a more diverse workforce
- COVID-19 response: Ensure all new social housing offers private or communal outdoor space with room for people to sit outside and space for **home working or study**
- Connected: Drive forward work to make all new social housing **digitally-enabled**. We will work with the social housing sector to explore the options for providing ready-to-go internet connections in new social housing

As recommended by the Social Renewal Advisory Board, **we will review the current housing adaptations system and make recommendations on how best to improve and streamline the system and maximise the impact of investment.** This will make full use of existing and planned housing stock to provide homes for as many people as possible, and enable people to stay in their homes for longer or return after hospitalisation. Social Renewal Advisory Board also asked us to review existing design standards and guidance to drive improvement and innovation across all tenures – we have already done so for the social rented sector and will do the same for other tenures.

Underpinning all of our action is a determination to ensure everyone has access to adequate, safe and secure housing – but too many still do not. Tackling homelessness remains a national priority. In 2018 we set out unambiguously how we will eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping in our Ending Homelessness Together action plan. We have been making steady progress but the experience of COVID-19 has shown we must accelerate our ambitions. We cannot see anyone return to rough sleeping following the unprecedented success of our response to the pandemic in supporting people into safe accommodation. We want to secure settled homes for those currently in emergency accommodation, and prevent anyone falling into homelessness.

The pandemic has enabled us to think differently. It means **we must modify night shelter provision this winter and actively end the use of night shelter and dormitory style provision in future,** building on examples in Glasgow and Edinburgh, by forming Rapid Rehousing Welcome Centres. These will enable an under-one-roof multi-agency triage system to make connections with appropriate services for people at the sharpest end of homelessness. The approach is based on scaling down hotel accommodation and night shelter provision and scaling up rapid rehousing and Housing First, where overnight and on-site sleeping arrangements will remain a last resort.

We must also go further and faster on the local rapid rehousing transition plans already in place. We are **funding a six month pilot project to facilitate settled accommodation in the private rented sector for individuals who are currently living in hotels in Edinburgh, having previously been rough sleeping or using the care shelter.** This will inform decision making on a Scotland-wide proposal. We have also fast-tracked plans to extend the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. This means no-one will stay in unsuitable temporary accommodation without access to basic facilities and support for more than seven days. We will continue to work with local authorities in areas where rough sleeping is most prevalent to ensure people currently accommodated in hotel rooms receive person-centred support, coupled with a strong accommodation offer to prevent a return to rough sleeping.

We will continue our work to transform the housing system to focus on the prevention of homelessness so that people are supported to remain in their homes, and **we will build on the learning in what we've so far known**, aimed at people with complex needs. By end of June 2020, 270 Housing First tenancies had started in the pathfinder areas, with a tenancy sustainment rate of 88%.

As also recommended by the Social Renewal Advisory Board, we will **strengthen guidance on discretionary housing payments**, to ensure it is clear and in particular for people transitioning from temporary to permanent accommodation.

To build upon this work, Social Renewal Advisory Board advice, and recent recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, **we will publish jointly with COSLA an updated Ending Homelessness Together action plan in autumn.**

A key part of our strategy for recovery is to prevent homelessness from happening in the first place. **We will continue to take action to minimise the risk of evictions into homelessness in the private and social rented sectors** – building on our learning from the emergency protections put in place through the course of the outbreak – and help people access the financial support available to them to continue to pay their rent and avoid rent arrears.

We know that the pandemic continues to have major financial repercussions and many households will be facing challenges in meeting their rent, therefore we are increasing support to tenants through a package of additional support. **We will establish a new £10 million Tenant Hardship Loan Fund** later this autumn which will provide interest free loans to support those struggling to meet their rent costs due to financial difficulty associated with the pandemic. This Fund will focus on those tenants unable to access other forms of support for their housing costs.

To provide direct financial support to those struggling with housing costs we have already made £5 million additional funding available for local authorities to provide Discretionary Housing Payments to those needing help with their housing costs, and **we will now increase the Discretionary Housing Payments funding by a further £3 million**, bringing total funding for DHPs to over £80 million. We will work with local authorities to help ensure this supports as many households as possible in a way that responds to local pressures resulting from COVID-19, and that tenants in arrears are aware of where they can get impartial advice on best options for their circumstances.

To provide additional time and relief for those experiencing issues with arrears **we will extend the emergency legislation put in place to protect private and social tenants from eviction during the pandemic up to six months**, subject to approval from the Scottish Parliament. Recognising the negative impact on communities, we will also introduce new regulations to allow for the notice period for eviction for anti-social or criminal behaviour to return to one month to protect neighbours and support landlords to resolve issues. Together this package will provide support, protection and options for tenants, enabling them to secure the financial support that is available to them so that they can keep paying their rent and remain in their homes over this unprecedented period.

Recognising that some groups are at higher risk of homelessness than others, we will continue to **implement the homelessness prevention pathways so that people leaving prison, care leavers and victims of domestic abuse have positive housing pathways** that support them to keep a settled home and achieve positive outcomes in their lives. We will ensure our policy responses are gender-sensitive and take into account the diverse and complex needs of women. We will also take forward plans to **remove the requirement for people facing homelessness to have a connection with the local area** before they can receive an offer of settled accommodation.

In the context of the significant growth in purpose built student accommodation and COVID-19, **we will conduct in 2021 a review of purpose built student accommodation**, in partnership with stakeholders. This will be taken forwards in parallel with work to ensure rent affordability and improving standards across the Private Rented Sector.

We recognise there has been a dramatic rise in the number of short-term lets in Scotland in the past few years. For many people, visitors and businesses, short-term lets offer a convenient, rewarding and authentic experience, and we will always seek to welcome more visitors from around the world. However, in some parts of the country, they have caused real and significant concerns about the impact on local communities and the availability of housing for permanent residents. It should be for local councils, and people, to determine the best use of housing to meet need in their areas.

That is why in 2019, we undertook a consultation on the benefits of and issues around short-term lets, the principles that would help to guide our approach, and some proposed approaches to regulation. The impact of COVID-19 delayed our work to regulate short-term lets in Scotland. However, this has recently been restarted and **we are aiming to lay secondary legislation to give local authorities powers to license short-term lets and introduce control areas in December so that it can be in force by spring 2021**. These powers will allow local authorities to balance the needs and concerns of their communities with wider economic and tourism interests.

Promoting equality and human rights

As set out throughout this Programme for Government, we are driving an ambitious and progressive agenda to ensure equality and human rights are embedded in all we do. The impacts of COVID-19 have been and will continue to be experienced disproportionately by different groups, including women, those from minority ethnic communities, older people and disabled people. To address this, we will **develop an equality and human rights mainstreaming strategy**, which is underpinned by a comprehensive approach to improving data collation and analysis, and will ensure that the voices of those impacted shape our approach and policies. We will **work across different groups to promote equality**, recognising intersectional inequality, drawing from the expertise of key stakeholders, and being guided by vital national forums such as the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls.

At a time of global crisis, meeting our international human rights obligations as a responsible modern nation has never been more important. We will continue work on the **First Minister's National Taskforce for Human Rights Leadership**, to deliver a radical blueprint for human rights legislation covering all areas of devolved responsibility. This will include how best to take forward our commitment to incorporate the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into domestic legislation. We will also actively consider the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People and the UN Convention on Racial Discrimination, working closely with key stakeholders in these sectors. We will continue to play our part in building international capacity to advance human rights **through increased funding for the Scottish Human Rights Defenders Fellowship**.

We will continue to take forward our work to protect, promote and improve equality in Scotland. This includes building on our international reputation for LGBTI equality. Our Non-Binary Working Group will bring valuable lived experience to our work towards equality for non-binary people, and we will continue work to produce guidance for the Scottish Government, which will also be available across the public sector and more widely, on realising trans inclusion while continuing to advance the rights of all women.

Inclusive communication is a crucial aspect of our approach to equality. The Social Renewal Advisory Board recommended work should be stepped up within Scottish Government and the wider public sector to promote accessible, inclusive communications for all – ensuring everyone in Scotland can access information on an equal basis. This is underway, with improved guidance and support now available to policy makers across Scottish Government.

Through our collaborative work on the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill, we also expect **access to free period products** to be enshrined in law for anyone who needs them, building on Scotland's world-leading work in this area.

Supporting older people

As we have seen starkly throughout the crisis, older people have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 restrictions and shielding measures. Our focus has been to keep people safe and connected. We have provided around £1.7 million to organisations who are directly supporting the needs of older people during the pandemic, including funding for helplines and food distribution. This has included over £700,000 to Age Scotland's Helpline and over £110,000 for older minority ethnic people's meal services.

Older people contribute hugely to volunteering, their communities and the economy. Older People's Strategic Action Forum members are participating in our Social Renewal Advisory Board in order to ensure the needs and contribution of older people are fully considered in Scotland's recovery.



Equally safe

The experience of lockdown reiterated the importance of protecting women and girls who are isolated and vulnerable during unprecedented times, and facing domestic abuse. **We provided a £1.5 million funding package for the women's aid and rape crisis network**, helping to maximise the effective protection and provision of support for those experiencing gender-based violence, both during the immediate crisis period and in the longer term. We continue to support Emily Test and Rape Crisis Scotland in their work in further and higher education sectors.

Everyone should be protected and violence, discrimination and gender-based inequality consigned to history. This year, we will **continue to implement our Equally Safe strategy** with a particular focus on supporting women and children at risk of violence and abuse. We will introduce legislation on domestic abuse protection orders, progress legislation to improve forensic medical examinations for victims of sexual assault, consult on challenging men's demand in relation to prostitution, and take forward the implementation of our new Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) Act. By the end of the year, we will **launch our £13 million Delivering Equally Safe Fund** to support greater prevention and early intervention for women and children at risk.

We will also continue to pursue our gender equality ambitions in education and learning via the mechanism of the Deputy First Minister's Gender Equality Taskforce in Education and Learning. Given the evidence which suggests that girls and young women are disproportionately impacted by crises such as COVID-19, we will continue to work with education and children's and equality stakeholders to ensure that girls and young women's experience of the education and learning landscape is a gender competent one.

As a result of the work of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland's Taskforce for the improvement of healthcare and forensic medical examination services for people who have experienced rape, sexual assault or child sexual abuse, such examinations no longer take place in a police station. The Taskforce is continuing its work to create a Scottish Sexual Assault Response Coordination (SSARC) service in each territorial Health Board supported by Scottish Government funding towards infrastructure and workforce. Despite the evident pressures involved in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, Health Boards remain committed to maintaining these services as part of their core service. Underpinning the work of the Taskforce, the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) Bill remains a priority and is proceeding to a new timetable. This will enshrine in law an holistic healthcare and recovery focused model and will provide a legal framework for consistent access to self-referral services across Scotland.

Improving outcomes for minority ethnic communities

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic communities. As set out throughout this document, we will **prioritise action to promote equality and human rights for minority ethnic communities**, taking a cross-portfolio approach to implementing the recommendations of the Expert Reference Group on COVID-19 and Ethnicity and build this into our ambitious plans to advance race equality. As part of this, we must recognise what we have done well to tackle issues of systemic racism in the past, but also where we must improve. As recommended by the Expert Reference Group, we will **undertake a review of past and current initiatives to tackle systemic racism**.



As outlined previously in this chapter, housing plays a key role in improving a range of social outcomes. Our housing approach already recognises the distinct needs of minority ethnic communities, and local authorities must consider these in their areas. But the experience of the pandemic shows we need to better understand and address the challenges faced by minority ethnic communities. We are carrying out an evidence review which will identify gaps and determine what further research is required to inform housing programmes of the future. **We will work with local authorities to ensure local housing strategies properly recognise and address challenges faced by minority ethnic communities and support them with the tools they need to do so.** As we review and renew the Social Housing Charter, we will look at all options to support improvements in the social housing sector.

Over the coming year, we will build on work in partnership with COSLA during the COVID-19 outbreak to support Councils to provide more and better Gypsy/Traveller accommodation, in line with our commitments in the Gypsy/Traveller action plan. Despite most accommodation meeting the Minimum Standard, we know that standards are lower than they should be in some areas and there continues to be a shortage of permanent sites for Gypsy/Traveller communities. With £2 million already made available this year, **we will ensure the needs of Gypsy/Travellers are appropriately and collectively resourced going forward.**

COVID-19 has not been the only global issue to bring greater attention to issues of racial inequality. The growing Black Lives Matter movement has shone a powerful spotlight on continuing racial injustice and race-based violence, and the need for countries to face their colonial history. Scotland, too, needs to address its history. Partnering with Museums Galleries Scotland, in collaboration with race equality and museums sector stakeholders, **we will sponsor an independent expert group to make recommendations on how Scotland's existing and future museum collections we can better recognise and represent a more accurate portrayal of Scotland's colonial and slavery history and what further steps should be taken to ensure people in Scotland are aware of the role Scotland played and how that manifests itself in our society today.** This will include how to reflect, interpret and celebrate the wide-ranging and positive contributions that ethnic minority communities have made and continue to make to Scotland.

Workplaces must share the diversity of the communities they serve and set a positive leadership example. **With the John Smith Centre, we will establish a Minority Ethnic Leadership and Development Programme,** a 9 month professional and personal development programme for 50 black and minority ethnic people from across Scotland. The Minority Ethnic Emerging Leaders Academy will support development of leadership, including internships and a dedicated mentor to support awardees throughout the programme and beyond. Backed by £470,000, this will support the Scottish Government ambition to remove barriers to leadership and increase diversity and representation from minority ethnic communities in public life.

In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, and one of the recommendations made by Scottish Government's COVID-19 Ethnicity Expert Group, we will engage with relevant stakeholders to better enable our children and young people to learn about Scotland's colonial and slavery history and the real need today to challenge racism, eliminate racial discrimination and advance equality. We will ensure that the diversity of our society is recognised and represented in the education workforce at all levels in line with the ambitions of the Race Equality Framework. As part of this work we will address the under representation of Minority Ethnic teachers in Scotland by exploring alternative pathways into teaching for Minority Ethnic and other underrepresented groups.

We will also continue to work with the Scottish Funding Council as it takes forward the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's inquiry into racial harassment in British Universities published in 2019.

Supporting cohesive communities

In response to COVID-19, we are working with faith communities and organisations to enable them to respond to the urgent challenges of the crisis and to support those that are most vulnerable. People who have come to Scotland to work, study, be with family, or who need a place of safety, must not be abandoned at this time of crisis. Nearly £275,000 funding was allocated to third sector organisations supporting people seeking asylum and others who are subject to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) to respond to people's essential needs during the pandemic.

We will work with COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council to support refugees and people seeking asylum to integrate in communities in Scotland, in line with the key principle of our New Scots strategy that integration begins from day one of arrival. Together with COSLA **we will publish an anti-destitution strategy** to support those in our communities most at risk from reserved immigration policies on NRPF. As part of this we are re-examining options to support those who are destitute through NRPF, including expanding the scope for more effective and dignified support.

As well as delivering consolidated, modernised and updated hate crime legislation, we will continue to work with stakeholders, including Police Scotland, to tackle and encourage reporting of hate crime. We will work with Police Scotland, Local Authorities and wider partners to safeguard those individuals who become vulnerable to divisive and radicalising narratives, including as a result of having been disconnected from positive influences during lockdown.

Veterans

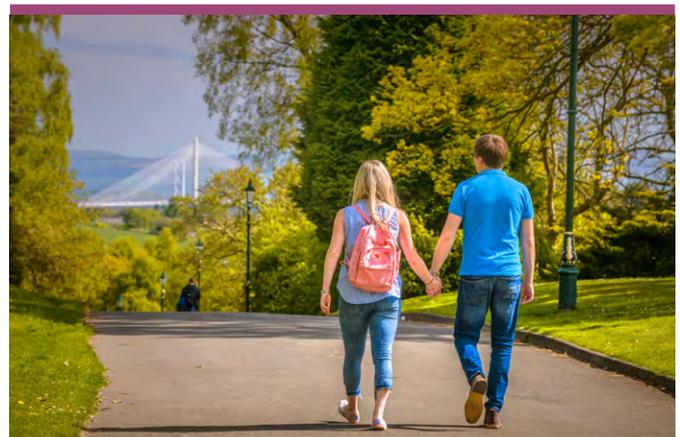
Veterans, members of the Armed Forces and their families are valued assets to our communities and society. We are fully committed to ensuring there is no disadvantage to the Armed Forces and veterans community in Scotland when accessing public services and support. Building on our cross-government approach to supporting veterans we will take forward the actions, published in January, in our implementation plan for the Strategy for our Veterans as well as continuing to progress the Scottish Veterans Commissioner's recommendations. This includes actions to improve support across key themes such as Employment, Education and Skills; and Health and Wellbeing. We will continue to invest in the Scottish Veterans Fund this year adding to the more than £1.5 million provided to over 170 projects since 2008. We will also fund the Unforgotten Forces consortium of charities with £750 000 over the three years to 2022-23 to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for older veterans.

A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities

Delivering on our ambitions for a fairer Scotland starts at a local community level. The COVID-19 response has shown the central importance of communities to supporting and protecting individuals and families across Scotland. It has changed the way we all live, work, learn and shop.

As the Social Renewal Advisory Board has noted, now is the time to add pace and focus to our place-based agenda, linking closely with our efforts to tackle the global climate emergency, and support a wellbeing economy. Building on the experience of COVID-19, we will work with local government to take forward our **ambitions for 20 minute neighbourhoods**.

The **20 minute neighbourhood** is an idea that is becoming popular across the world. Developed in different ways in cities like Melbourne, Portland and Paris, people can meet most of their essential needs within a 20 minute walk. This means you can do your shopping, join in with leisure activities, take your children to school, find local services like your GP practice and ideally get to work – all within easy access of where you live. It also means having greenspace on your doorstep and a local environment that encourages active travel to promote health and well-being. It is a place where people want to live, so affordable housing must be part of it.



The idea of the 20 minute neighbourhood aligns with our town centre first approach where our work on the links between planning and public health have been held up as an example throughout the UK and globally. To build on that we have launched **a Review of the Town Centre Action Plan** and have asked the Review for advice on how to adapt the 20 minute neighbourhood idea for our cities, towns, rural and island communities. Many of our local communities are already benefitting from their 20 minute neighbourhoods, but many others aren't and there will be particular challenges for some of our rural and island communities where services are much more spread out. The Review is due to report at the end of November. Aligned with this activity, and in recognition of the significant impact of the pandemic on the retail sector, we will work with the sector and across government to develop our retail strategy. This will seek to address the particular opportunities and challenges faced by the sector and to provide a more resilient future for retailers in Scotland.

We will also establish a Place Based Investment Programme, linking and aligning all place-based funding initiatives to ensure we have a coherent approach to effectively progress our 20 minute neighbourhood ambitions. As part of this Programme, **we will invest £275 million to support community-led regeneration and town-centre revitalisation**, including the repurposing of buildings, maintenance and repairs, reallocating external space and community-led land acquisition. This will also support the ongoing work on **Clyde Gateway**.

As recommended by the Social Renewal Advisory Board, we will also look to strengthen our **support for community anchor organisations** – like housing associations and community development trusts – that provide essential services with communities. We will use our Empowering Communities Programme to build on the learning from the COVID-19 response, strengthen the community anchor model and support its wider take up.

The COVID-19 pandemic has required us to rethink how and where we work, opening up new ways to think about our neighbourhoods, towns, cities and rural communities. The programme will support efforts to progress the **Working Local Challenge** ambition to create more shared space local working hubs for the private, public and third sector in local towns to enable more flexible and remote working.

We will consider the recommendations of the Vacant and Derelict Land Taskforce and explore opportunities to invest in our local blue and green infrastructure targeting problematic long-term vacant and derelict land, to deliver sustainable inclusive growth, and mitigate climate change as part of the Green Recovery.

One positive experience of lockdown has been the increase in active travel. Research from Transport Scotland shows that cycling was the only mode of transport to show an increase in demand compared to last year. We must lock in those positive changes through active travel infrastructure schemes which connect towns and cities from the suburbs to the centres, connect housing to transport, enable active travel in rural areas and support the idea of 20 minute neighbourhoods. Addressing cycling and walking infrastructure challenges through space reallocation will alleviate pinch points and ensure transition from lockdown doesn't result in a surge in private car use.

Over £500 million over 5 years for walking, cycling and wheeling



To support this, **we will commit to just over £500 million over five years** for active travel, including for local authorities and others to bid in for funding of large scale, transformational active travel infrastructure projects, reallocating road space in favour of walking, cycling and wheeling over cars.

In response to the significant decrease in car usage, and increase in active travel witnessed during lockdown we worked with Sustrans to put forward a programme of temporary measures including reallocation of road space in favour of pedestrians and cyclists. This programme ('Spaces for People') utilised almost £39 million funding from the Places for Everyone Programme which funds permanent infrastructure and which could not operate under COVID-19 restrictions. **Local authorities now have the opportunity to review the temporary infrastructure projects – turning many of them into permanent schemes** – and we are engaging with them to determine where this is possible.

As part of our sustainable transport future, in 2019 we announced a landmark, long term capital investment of over £500 million for bus priority measures to tackle the impacts of congestion on bus services. Work on this was paused during the pandemic, but in the interim we have launched the £10 million Bus Priority Rapid Deployment Fund for temporary bus priority measures. Building on this, and working closely with COSLA, the bus industry and other partners, we will launch the Bus Partnership Fund in the coming months to support local authorities' ambitions around tackling congestion so that bus journeys are quicker and more reliable, and more people make the choice to take the bus. Work is also underway to reallocate road space on parts of the motorway network around Glasgow to high occupancy vehicles such as buses.

Public transport demand remains impacted by the need for physical distancing and a drop in public confidence. Working from home, the move to more shopping online and impacts on the tourism sector have seen major reductions in demand. Given the levels of uncertainty it is only right that we consider the implications for transport and how we re-start the second Strategic Transport Projects Review to ensure that this will help identify interventions that would aid or help accelerate economic recovery. We will take a phased approach to STPR2, with Phase 1 focusing on recommendations which “lock in” the benefits and travel behaviours of individuals and provide a step change in investment which supports the priorities and outcomes of the National Transport Strategy.

We will also accelerate our work to consider a range of possible permanent options to address the challenges faced on the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful, with a dedicated parallel project team now established to progress the environmental and engineering assessment, as well as stakeholder engagement.

Although young people have been negatively impacted by this crisis, we know they are full of many ideas and aspirations for Scotland and we also know that young people, working with Government and partners, can spearhead creative approaches and positive change that can help our service providers and communities recover well from COVID-19. Therefore, as one of the most impacted groups we want to hear their views. We will **engage with young people on the future of transport**, seeking their views on how we tackle transport inequalities and move us towards a more sustainable and inclusive Scottish transport network.

We remain **committed to delivering a national concessionary travel scheme for free bus travel for under-19s**, and have begun the necessary preparations including planning, research, legal review and due diligence. We will consult with young people, local authorities, transport operators and other stakeholders to maximise the benefits of the scheme. We will consult with young people’s views on the impacts of COVID-19 and post-lockdown measures on public transport usage and behaviour to inform this, and as part of the review of discounts available on public transport to those under the age of 26 which is due for completion end of December 2020.

Alongside these substantial efforts to increase active travel, we must also work to improve road safety – ensuring people feel safe, with appropriate measures in place to enable that. **We will publish Scotland’s Road Safety Framework to 2030**, following consultation on an ambitious and compelling long-term vision for road safety where there are zero fatalities or serious injuries on Scotland’s roads by 2050. This will include ambitious interim targets where the number of people being killed or seriously injured on our roads will be halved by 2030. In line with international best practice we will embed the Safe System approach within our road safety delivery framework.

Taking decisive action to promote active travel, improve public transport, and reduce our reliance on cars will ensure we can have a positive impact on air quality, the natural environment, and individual health and wellbeing. That also underpins our commitment to **introduce Low Emission Zones (LEZs) in our four biggest cities**, and into all other air quality management areas by 2023, where the National Low Emission Framework appraisals advocate such mitigation. LEZs are an important form of vehicle access regulation, setting an environmental limit on certain road spaces and improving air quality by restricting access to the dirtiest vehicles, particularly at locations where there is public exposure.

Scotland's first LEZ was launched in Glasgow, with an initial focus on buses, at the end of 2018. While we were on track to meet our commitment for LEZ introductions in 2020, the pandemic caused significant disruption to planning and resourcing. In May, the LEZ Leadership Group took the difficult but pragmatic decision to pause LEZ introductions. Work on introducing LEZs will now resume on the basis **of introducing LEZ's in the three remaining cities between February and May 2022**. We will also **consult on a draft new air quality strategy** in the latter part of 2020, setting out how we will deliver further air quality improvements over the next five years. The new strategy will be published in the first part of 2021.

All of our work to redesign our communities to best respond to the pandemic and living with COVID-19 will be underpinned by National Planning Framework 4, local development plans, and **Local Place Plans**, introduced through the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, and by giving people an opportunity to develop proposals for the development and use of land in the place where they live. We know people want more power to shape the places they live in, care about, and know best.

Our work so far on the Local Governance Review has involved over 4,000 people discussing the future of local democracy. COVID-19 delayed the next part of this conversation, but the response to the pandemic has reinforced what communities told us they can achieve. Once we are able, we will begin widespread engagement to explore in detail how a new tier of democracy can be made to work in practice. To prepare the way we will start work now with a small number of diverse communities to learn how best to approach these conversations. As we move forward, these places will provide a bedrock to shape ambitious legislative change, test alternative resource allocation, and experiment with new inclusive forms of decision-making. We also know that the way power and resources are shared between national and local government across all of our public services contributes to the success of different places. The Local Governance Review creates an important opportunity to agree changes which can support community aspiration and help achieve our shared ambition set out in the National Performance Framework.

Ensuring safer communities

Our Justice and emergency services have provided a significant response through the pandemic in keeping our communities safe. Among other success stories, we have seen the strength of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in maintaining essential fire and rescue services throughout, the Scottish Ambulance Service have provided a vital health response while also enabling patient transport, and Police Scotland have played a critical role in supporting our actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in communities.

A single national police service allowed for a quick, clear and consistent policing response to COVID-19, supported by £1.2bn public investment and real terms protection since 2016. Police Scotland has been at the front and centre of the response to COVID-19 in Scotland, and continues to work closely with all partners including in local authorities and health to support the collective effort to combat COVID-19. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis their 4Es approach to policing – Engaging, Explaining, Encouraging and only as a last resort Enforcing – has been central in ensuring our collective approach to the unprecedented but necessary public health measures put in place. Police officers and staff continue to put themselves in harm's way to protect the public and **we are fully supportive of the pledge made by the Chief Constable outlining his commitment to reduce the impact of violence and improve the safety of officers and staff.**

As we start to move beyond the immediate impacts of the pandemic on justice services, we will focus on recovery and renewal, to enable the justice system to go beyond pre-COVID-19 work, and prepare for future transformation. As a result of the restrictions that needed to be put in place during the pandemic, we recognise there is a very significant and growing backlog in cases waiting to come before a court, with associated impacts for those accused of crime, victims and witnesses. The resumption of court business will exert pressure at all points of the justice system – from the impact on court services, as those on remand cannot be tried, to a potential increase in the prison population when they are. During the pandemic, we have provided additional funding for investment in court technology and towards the establishment of remote jury centres to allow the most serious criminal cases to proceed. This investment has also supported the civil justice system which has maintained business, where practical, by remote means. **We will work with justice bodies, the legal profession, victims organisations and others to look at how we can continue to tackle the backlog and provide confidence to victims, witness and others affected by delays.**

To ensure we have a strong response to those pressures, and plan for longer term reform, we have **established a Recover, Renew, Transform programme, overseen by a newly established Criminal Justice Board.** This Board – bringing together criminal and community justice stakeholders, and drawing on the views of victim support service representatives and others – will consider proposals for the reform of the justice system. That includes building upon innovations put in place during the pandemic, including greater use of digital tools. It will also consider support for victims and witnesses, and ways to prevent repeat offending and manage the prison population, through more effective community-based interventions. Building on the presumption against short custodial sentences, which was extended to

12 months or less in 2019, **we will promote and expand the availability of effective community interventions**, including bringing forward regulations for the use of electronic monitoring on bail, supporting increased accessibility to supervised bail services and publishing guidance on structured deferred sentences.

As part of our transformation of the justice service, we are committed to modernising the prison estate, with a priority on the new female custodial estate and replacements for HMP Barlinnie and HMP Inverness. Our plans for the new female estate are transformative and world-leading. It will deliver, by the end of 2022, a new national prison and two Community Custody Units in Dundee and Glasgow tailored to the specific support needs of women. We take seriously the pressures facing HMP Barlinnie and have provided additional funding for remedial measures that will directly address infrastructure concerns. This remedial work is expected to be complete by summer 2022 at the latest, on a phased basis to enable crucial services of the prison to remain running.

Underpinning the recovery and transformation agenda, we will put the interests of victims at the heart of justice reforms, supported by the work of the Victims Taskforce. **We will continue work to strengthen communication and engagement with victims and families throughout the justice process.** We will work with justice agencies and third sector support providers to explore further use of non-court buildings for the pre-recording and giving of evidence. To better support victims or witnesses of sexual offences involved in the criminal justice system we will consider the recommendations from the report of Lady Dorrian's Review of the management of sexual offences. While the pandemic has placed significant pressure on parliamentary time, we will continue to progress the Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences) (Scotland) Bill before the end of the parliament.

As part of our broadly preventative approach to violence, we will continue to work with Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit and Medics Against Violence to support the development of the Navigator programme. Now operational in emergency departments around Scotland, the Navigator programme engages with people who have been affected by violence and to stop the revolving door of violent injury in our hospitals as well as easing the pressure that such violence places on vital public services.

As part of our wider work on community safety, we will take forward the actions outlined in the Fireworks Action Plan, and run a public awareness campaign to promote the safe and appropriate use of fireworks ahead of bonfire night this year. The recommendations of the Fireworks Review Group on tightening legislation on fireworks will be considered to ensure our communities are safer and to reduce the harm, and fear, caused by misuse of fireworks. We will also consult further on the law on dangerous dogs, including the offence of a dog being dangerously out of control contained within the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

THE FISCAL CONTEXT



The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global economic downturn and has pushed up borrowing and public finances into deficit the world over. All European countries, including the UK, have taken unprecedented steps to fund the health and care response and to support businesses and individuals to deal with the sudden reduction in economic activity necessitated by measures taken to manage the pandemic. The UK Government's emergency response has been welcome but it is coming to an end, and the future recovery package, equivalent to 1% of UK GDP, lacks the ambition of responses that we have seen from the EU and some other countries.

In Scotland we have committed to spending all £6.5 billion of the funding we have received through the Barnett formula to tackle the effects this crisis has had on our health service and economy. Our business support measures complement the UK Government's support to furloughed workers to ensure that the economic harm of the pandemic is reduced as far as possible and to enable a quicker recovery.

Before the crisis hit, the 2020-21 Scottish Budget had set out an ambitious expenditure programme in the context of the economic damage caused by Brexit. COVID-19 has required the Scottish Government and its delivery partners to work differently and to integrate resources and decision making to tackle the public health crisis.

Key economic levers, including the vast majority of tax levers and almost all borrowing powers, lie with the UK Government. Their decisions still determine, in large part, the size and shape of the Scottish budget and therefore by extension the resources we have to respond to the economic crisis. The Fiscal Framework agreement with the UK Government gives us only very limited borrowing powers for capital expenditure and on resource only for the purposes of cash management or to deal with forecast errors relating to tax receipts, social security expenditure and the block grant adjustment.

The Scottish Government's ability to fulfil its devolved responsibilities remains hampered by a centralised UK budgeting approach that leaves little fiscal flexibility to the devolved administrations. We need greater fiscal flexibility to tackle this economic crisis; and so the UK Government must give the Scottish Government either the additional funding or the powers needed to respond to these challenges.

In addition to these more significant changes we will continue to press HM Treasury for additional fiscal powers, which would allow the Scottish Government to take some measures to manage our existing budget more effectively; for example, the flexibility to reallocate any unused capital funding to day-to-day spending and to borrow up to £500 million this year. In the longer term, supporting the recovery and renewal of the Scottish economy after COVID-19 will require a much broader range of devolved fiscal powers than the Scottish Parliament currently has.

Responding to the crisis and supporting recovery

We have already called for the UK Government to match the ambition of comparable countries and support a recovery package worth £80 billion, 4% of UK GDP. This would allow administrations across the UK to support their communities, businesses and public services to get back on their feet. The last thing that is needed, or wanted, is more UK Government driven austerity; we know it would simply cause more harm.

Building fiscal resilience

The current fiscal framework is built on the assumption that shocks affect the countries of the UK in a similar way.

The Fiscal Framework protects Scotland against some shocks, but it limits Scotland's policy autonomy in the face of a crisis. The block grant adjustment mechanism means that UK tax and social security decisions have a direct impact on the Scottish budget, even though the respective tax and social security powers are devolved. This could lead to our budget reducing as a result of taking decisions to manage the crisis that are right for Scotland, but different to those taken by the UK Government. So we have the policy powers to act but our hands are tied by the constraints on our fiscal powers. It is clear that the Fiscal Framework is not fit for purpose. It therefore needs to be urgently and thoroughly reviewed. We will ensure that this comprehensive review of the Fiscal Framework takes place as quickly as possible and takes into account not just the views of the Scottish Parliament but of a wide range of stakeholders here in Scotland.

In the meantime, we will continue to press the UK Government to agree the temporary flexibilities that we and the other Devolved Administrations have requested. Ultimately, without a significant change to the Fiscal Framework the Scottish Government, and Parliament, is hamstrung in its response to the crisis. The UK Government has massively increased its borrowing this year to pay for schemes like the furlough scheme. This type of approach is unavailable to the Scottish Government

and will inevitably mean difficult decisions over the coming months in how we balance our response to the crisis with our wider policy commitments and ambitions to renew our communities and economy.

Scottish taxation policy

Where the Scottish Government does have the powers to act, we have a strong track record of using these powers to make taxation fairer and more progressive. We have also taken a more open, consultative approach to taxation – something we will continue to do in relation to the COVID-19 recovery and in the lead up to the Scottish Budget 2021-22. To that end, we will launch an open call for Budget representations, *Budget 2021-22: Supporting the COVID-19 Recovery – Scotland's Taxes and Fiscal Framework*, seeking in advance of the Budget the widest possible range of views on the role of our devolved taxes and the Fiscal Framework in the COVID-19 recovery.

We have taken swift and significant action on Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT) to help homebuyers and support Scotland's housing market in response to the impact of COVID-19. The increase in the starting rate threshold for LBTT to £250,000 until the end of next March, means that, excluding the Additional Dwelling Supplement (ADS), some eight of out ten homebuyers and an estimated nine out of ten first-time buyers currently pay no LBTT.

We have a strong record of delivering a competitive non-domestic rates regime. We have offered the most generous relief package in the UK for a number of years, and the lowest poundage for 95% of properties.

On 11 March 2020, the Non-Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 2020 received Royal Assent to deliver the legislative framework necessary to enable a number of the Barclay Review recommendations to be implemented. The Act delivers the move to a three-year revaluation cycle and reforms to the appeals system as well as new powers to assessors, local authorities and ministers to improve the administration of the system and to tackle tax avoidance.

On the same day that the Act received Royal Assent, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic. The Scottish Government responded swiftly and as part of our over £2.3 billion investment in Scottish business we have effectively underwritten £1 billion of non-domestic rates income for Local Government in 2020-21, by introducing new reliefs – including a universal 1.6% rates relief for all non-domestic properties across Scotland, and a 100% relief for properties in the retail, hospitality, leisure and aviation sectors from which an estimated 30,000 properties will benefit. These decisions have protected businesses and, unlike in England, also protected council funding due to the Scottish Government's policy to guarantee the level of funding provided by Non-Domestic Rates and General Revenue Grant combined.

The next non-domestic rates revaluation in Scotland will take effect in 2023, the same year as in England and Wales, but will be based on rental values as at 1 April 2022, and not 1 April 2020. This will mean that properties' rateable values will better reflect true market conditions, taking into account any COVID-19 effects, and delivers our commitment to move to revaluations with a one-year time date two years ahead of schedule.

We have used our powers over Income Tax to create the most fair and progressive system in the UK, protecting lower and middle income taxpayers while raising additional revenue to support our economy. Our approach has ensured that for the third consecutive year, the majority of people in Scotland will pay less tax than they would if they lived elsewhere in the UK.

With outstanding state aid issues related to the UK Aggregates Levy now resolved and the UK Government review complete, we will work closely with stakeholders in the coming months to consider policy options and develop the necessary evidence base to support the introduction of a devolved levy in Scotland. This will build on the research recently published by the Scottish Government. However, it will be for the next Scottish Parliament to consider the legislation that would be required to provide for a levy in Scotland.

We also remain fully committed to introducing the Air Departure Tax (ADT) when a solution to the Highlands and Islands exemption issue has been found. We will engage with the HM Treasury on their consultation on Air Passenger Duty reform and will work with stakeholders to find a solution for aviation that remains consistent with our climate ambitions.

Plans for the implementation of a Transient Visitor Levy were put on hold as part of our response to the COVID-19 crisis and in recognition of the severe economic impact COVID-19 has had on the sector. Our priority right now is to work with the sector to ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for the tourism industry in Scotland and future consideration of the levy will take account of the changed context the industry is operating in.

The Scottish Government is working with the UK Government to develop an agreed methodology for VAT assignment. This process has been complicated by the economic shock as a result of COVID-19 and we are focused on ensuring that we get the best deal for Scotland.

EU EXIT AND THE CONSTITUTION



Brexit

The Scottish Government believes the best future for Scotland is to be an independent country and member of the European Union. The overwhelming majority of people in Scotland voted to remain within the EU and subsequent elections have reinforced that strong opposition to Brexit.

Despite these repeated democratic votes, the UK Government removed Scotland from the EU, against its will, on 31 January this year. The UK currently still enjoys most of the economic benefits of EU membership as it is in a transition period in which rules continue to be aligned and the existing trading relationship is maintained but that period runs out at the end of this year.

In June the Scottish Government published a detailed case for extending that transition, given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Scotland's businesses and public services and the difficulty of making preparations for such a dramatic change at this time. The UK Government, however, has refused to extend the transition and therefore a new relationship between the UK and EU will come into effect at the end of this year.

It is not clear whether or not there will be an agreement on the future relationship or whether the transition period will end with a deal. However, the UK Government's ambition for the new relationship is so limited that even if an agreement can be struck, the damage to Scotland and its people in many aspects of the relationship is likely to be comparable to "no deal." The Brexit process has already been hugely damaging to Scotland, but we will experience the full, negative, impact of Brexit from 1 January 2021 onwards. The Scottish Government is therefore being forced to prepare for this change, which will hit the Scottish economy hard, at the same time as tackling the pandemic.

There are now less than four months to implement the Withdrawal Agreement and the Northern Ireland Protocol; conclude the negotiations of the future EU-UK relationship including parliamentary ratification; implement any agreement on the future relationship; and make the necessary practical, procedural and legal changes, including making businesses aware of what it will mean for them. The UK Government's highly political approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol has left businesses – and the UK's Devolved Administrations – largely in the dark as to what is intended.

In any event, it will not be possible to prepare fully for the inevitable economic damage that will be created by forcing Scotland into no deal or a poor deal in just a few months' time and during a period where the sole focus of many businesses will continue to be how to survive the pandemic. There will be a negative Brexit shock. The only question is how big that shock will be. The Scottish Government estimates that Scottish GDP could be up to 1.1% lower by 2022 compared to continued EU membership, this implies that the cost could amount to a cumulative loss of economic activity of up to £3 billion over these two years with much bigger long-term costs. At a time where we are working tirelessly with people, communities and businesses across Scotland to avoid a second COVID-19 peak and the further economic damage that this would cause, this entirely unnecessary hard Brexit is a bitter pill to swallow.

We are also taking forward the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Bill to replace powers we will lose at the end of the transition period. This will help Scots law, where appropriate, after 31 December 2020 to keep up with future developments in EU law, and allow changes to be made to EU-based laws which are already operating in Scotland using secondary legislation. Scotland can then continue to benefit from developments in EU laws and standards. The Bill also makes arrangements regarding domestic replacements for EU environmental principles and governance, including setting up a body to secure full and effective implementation of environmental law in Scotland. The Bill will be a strong signal to the EU that Scotland continues to uphold the EU's core values and could help to ease an independent Scotland's application for membership as an independent country.

We would aim to rejoin the EU, not simply as a country with much to gain, but as one which has much to contribute. The basic principle behind the EU – of independent nations working together for a common good – is one which appeals to many people in Scotland, and the recent experience of responding to COVID-19 has seen EU nations work together, whether in regard to financial measures through the Recovery Fund, joint procurement initiatives such as on PPE and vaccines, and sharing information and co-ordinating on areas like border controls. Scotland also has day to day experience of the practical advantages of EU membership, for example, benefiting from the EU regulations that have made our rivers and coasts cleaner or through the collaborations that our universities have established with research partners across the continent.

As well as the solidarity the EU offers to smaller member states, we recognise the opportunities that EU membership provides for people, for societies and for businesses. EU freedom of movement has given opportunities to people living in Scotland, and has encouraged new Scots to contribute to our economy and our society. One of our priorities, at present, is to support those EU citizens to stay in Scotland. And of course, our businesses have benefited from the single market. We are leaving the European Union, at a time when we have never benefited from it more. In an age when intolerance and bigotry seems to be on the rise, the values of the EU – values of democracy, equality, solidarity, the rule of law and respect for human rights – are more important than ever. At a time of climate crisis, co-operating with the EU and exchanging expertise and experience improves our ability to tackle climate change at home, and amplifies our voice in international negotiations. And in an age of great trading blocks, the EU represents our best opportunity to benefit from free trade, without engaging in a race to the bottom.

In all of these issues, Scotland is a country which can and will make a difference – we will lead by example where we can, but we will also learn from the example of others. We know we will do this more effectively by working in partnership, and our sovereignty would be amplified, not diminished, by membership of the EU.

The UK Government's Internal Market legislation

In July 2020 the UK Government published proposals which it argues are necessary to protect the UK's "internal market" after Brexit. Those would include a requirement that goods and services from one part of the UK would be automatically accepted in another, regardless of the standards applied. As a result, the democratic decisions of the Scottish Parliament – on food safety, animal welfare, the environment, public health and a host of other matters could be undermined and effectively rendered meaningless. Scotland would have to accept lower standards in matters for which the Scottish Parliament is responsible, regardless of the Parliament's views.

This has profound implications for citizens, businesses and consumers across Scotland. For example, the food and drink industry is worth £15 billion a year to Scotland and supports over 115,000 jobs, many in economically fragile rural and island communities. The success of this sector is built on the quality and provenance guarantees that come with the Scottish brand, supported by high EU standards. These proposals would force Scotland to accept lower food safety, animal health and environmental standards, effectively imposed by a UK Government in pursuit of a US trade deal.

These proposals are the most significant threat to devolution since the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. In August 2020 the Scottish Parliament voted overwhelmingly to oppose them. The Welsh Government has also made clear its opposition, condemning the "unnecessary, unworkable [and] heavy-handed" plans as "a direct attack on the current model of devolution" that would "emasculate the current rights of the devolved institutions". The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee at Westminster has itself made clear that the UK Government's proposals "will effectively create new reservations in areas of devolved competence".

The UK Government has produced no convincing reason for why such sweeping reductions in devolved powers are needed. Indeed it has produced these proposals at a late stage despite on-going productive work in progress between the four UK governments to agree common frameworks to replace EU arrangements. That approach – agreement – is the correct way forward to respect devolution and protect the interests of people, businesses and the environment across the UK. Food safety for example is a fully devolved matter. Food Standards Scotland is the national regulator and works closely with partner bodies across the UK. Work is proceeding well on a food standards framework – an agreed common approach to managing policy difference across the UK while ensuring clarity and coherence for businesses and consumers. This is the correct way to address the issues the UK Government raises in its White Paper

The Scottish Government has made clear that we will resist this attack on devolution at every turn – and Scotland's Parliament has made clear its opposition. We have published detailed initial analysis of why the plans are unnecessary and, should the UK Government persist and introduce legislation, we will not recommend that the Parliament give its consent. We have also made a commitment not to diverge in any area to be covered by a common framework until these are completed, and urge the UK Government to make the same commitment.

Independence

The Scottish Government has a democratic mandate in this Parliament to offer the people of Scotland their right to choose a future as an independent country in which decisions about Scotland are taken by the people who live here.

In 2014, shortly before the referendum of that year, the political leaders of the campaign against Scottish independence affirmed an important principle when they collectively agreed: *“Power lies with the Scottish people and we believe it is for the Scottish people to decide how Scotland is governed.”*

The right of people in Scotland to decide their own future was also unanimously acknowledged in the Smith Commission report of November 2014 which said: *“It is agreed that nothing in this report prevents Scotland becoming an independent country in the future should the people of Scotland so choose.”*

In line with its mandate, constitutional precedents and agreed all-party principles, the Scottish Government sought an agreement on an order under Section 30 of the Scotland Act 1998 to place a referendum on independence beyond legal challenge.

The Scottish Parliament has already passed into law the Referendums (Scotland) Act which sets out the framework, campaign rules and conduct of polls and counts for any referendum that is within devolved competence.

A future independence referendum would apply these rules. Under the terms of the Referendums (Scotland) Act, a further Act of the Scottish Parliament is required setting the question to be asked and the date of the poll before a referendum can be held.

Because of the pandemic the Scottish Government paused work on independence and it will clearly not be possible to organise and hold an independence referendum that is beyond legal challenge before the end of the current Parliamentary term next year.

However, before the end of this parliament, to set out the terms of a future referendum clearly and unambiguously to the people of Scotland, the Scottish Government will publish a draft bill for an independence referendum setting out the question to be asked, subject to appropriate testing by the Electoral Commission, and the timescale in which, within the next term of Parliament, we consider the referendum should be held taking account of the development of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of publication, and ensuring the flexibilities to respond to any further restrictions caused by it.

If there is majority support for the bill in the Scottish Parliament in the next term, there could then be no moral or democratic justification whatsoever for any UK government to ignore the rights of the people of Scotland to choose our own future.

Scotland's democracy Elections

The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 supports the piloting of new approaches to make voting more accessible for those facing the greatest barriers. It requires the Electoral Commission to consider the needs of persons with disabilities in reviewing pilots and reporting on elections. We are also working on solutions for people with sight loss to enable them to vote independently and in secret. Through the Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Act 2020 we extended the franchise for devolved elections to all foreign nationals with leave to remain from August 2020. This Act also reaffirms the rights of EU nationals to vote and stand for election in Scottish Parliament and local government elections after EU exit.

We expect the Scottish Parliament Election scheduled to be held on 6 May 2021 to go ahead. We are working with the Electoral Management Board to explore options for running the election in circumstances different to the norm, if required.

Citizens' Assembly

In 2019, we established a Citizens' Assembly to explore some of the major challenges facing Scotland: what kind of country we should be; how can Scotland best overcome challenges, including those from Brexit; and, what further work is required to enable people to make informed choices about the future of Scotland. To date, the Citizens' Assembly has engaged on wide ranging issues – from what leads to a good life and a good society, to Scotland's financial choices to create a sustainable society. We strongly believe that the Citizens' Assembly can continue to play an important role in providing space for an informed, independent and adult conversation about the issues that are most important to the people of Scotland as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. In August 2020, following a hiatus due to the pandemic, the Assembly announced a move to online working and published an interim report summarising their discussions so far. The report considers the values that members suggested are important to a vision for the future of the country and identified three broad areas of focus: fair work and fairer taxes; a greener Scotland; and citizen information and improving decision making. It also highlighted the importance of discussing the impact of COVID-19 and different ideas about recovery and renewal as members reach their conclusions. The Assembly will reconvene with a series of online meetings between September and the publication of a final report and recommendations in December 2020.

Open Government

We remain fully committed to making the Scottish government work better for the people it serves, and ensuring we are fully transparent in the process. While COVID-19 led to a delay in publication, our second Open Government Action Plan is on track for delivery in December 2020. We know that continuing this candidness and transparency will play a crucial role in maintaining and building trust in Government as we collectively recover from COVID-19. Building, for example, on our success in accelerating the handling of Freedom of Information requests within the Scottish Government so that 96% of requests were answered on time in the 9 months to March 2020, exceeding the target agreed with the Scottish Information Commissioner. Our third action plan will be developed over the first 6 months of 2021 and will bring a focus to Scotland's commitments to openness, accountability, and citizen participation as part of our strategic plan to emerge, renewed, from the pandemic.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMME



Over the course of this parliamentary session the Scottish Government has so far secured the passage of 49 Bills. This includes two emergency Coronavirus Bills passed in record time, following very rapid approval of legislative consent for the devolved aspects of the UK Coronavirus Bill. Our wide-ranging, radical programme of reform has supported our long term vision and direction for building a fair, prosperous, sustainable and innovative country. We have legislated to increase the empowerment of our island communities, to establish an agency dedicated to driving growth in the South of Scotland and to provide for a Scottish National Investment Bank which will support our overarching economic strategy. From the creation of new statutory targets to tackle Child Poverty, to our world-leading approach to responding to Climate Change, and to the establishment of a new social security system that is based on dignity and respect, our legislative agenda has sought to deliver for all of Scotland.

The twin challenges of continuing to deal with the COVID-19 crisis and the UK Government's reckless pursuit of EU Exit will frame much of our legislative agenda for the remainder of this parliamentary session. We will continue to ensure that Scotland has the tools that are necessary to deal with the continuing pandemic, including any steps needed to ensure the safe running of the next Scottish Parliament election. In addition, however unwelcome the task may be, we will put in place the legislation which is required to ensure our law can work effectively at the end of the Transition Period and for other reasons connected with EU Exit. To give a sense of the scale of that task we have already made over 50 Scottish Statutory Instruments and, with the approval of the Scottish Parliament, agreed to the making of around 170 UK Statutory Instruments affecting devolved matters, for this purpose.

Against that challenging backdrop the Scottish Government will progress 11 bills before the end of this parliamentary session. This includes continuing the passage of bills introduced last year such as the forensic medical services (Victims of Sexual Offences) Bill and the Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) Bill.

We will also introduce to the Parliament a further 4 new Bills in our final legislative programme of this parliamentary session. In fact this year will see one of our most ambitious Bills go before Parliament. The UNCRC (Incorporation) Bill will see one of the most significant changes to our legal system since devolution. It will incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law so that the rights of children, young people and their families will be built into all aspects of public life in Scotland. We will also seek to advance the existing legislative protections for those most at risk of domestic abuse, including the ability to ban suspected perpetrators from their homes.

Whilst we will seek to deliver our domestic legislative programme in full, we will ensure that legislation which is needed to respond to the COVID-19 crisis is prioritised.

Bills to be progressed this parliamentary year

New

- Budget
- Domestic Abuse
- The UNCRC (Incorporation) Bill
- University of St. Andrews
(Degrees in Medicine and Dentistry)

Already introduced

- Defamation and Malicious Publication
- Forensic Medical Services
(Victims of Sexual Offences)
- Hate Crime and Public Order
- Heat Networks
- Redress for Survivors
(Historical Child Abuse in Care)
- Social Security Administration
and Tribunal Membership
- UK Withdrawal from the
European Union (Continuity)

Bills passed this Session

- Age of Criminal Responsibility Act 2019
- Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) Act 2020
- Air Departure Tax Act 2017
- Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) Act 2020
- Budget Act 2017
- Budget (No.2) Act 2018
- Budget (No.3) Act 2019
- Budget (No.4) Act 2020
- Census (Amendment) Act 2019
- Child Poverty Act 2017
- Children Act 2020
- Civil Litigation (Expenses and Group Proceedings) Act 2018
- Civil Partnership Act 2020
- Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) Act 2019
- Consumer Scotland Act 2020
- Contract (Third Party Rights) Act 2017
- Coronavirus Act 2020
- Coronavirus (No.2) Act 2020
- Damages (Investment Returns and Periodical Payments) Act 2019
- Disclosure Act 2020
- Domestic Abuse Act 2018
- Female Genital Mutilation (Protection and Guidance) Act 2020
- Forestry and Land Management Act 2018
- Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) Act 2019
- Gender Representation on Public Boards Act 2018
- Health and Care (Staffing) Act 2019
- Historical Sexual Offences (Pardons and Disregards) Act 2018
- Housing (Amendment) Act 2018
- Human Tissue (Authorisation) Act 2019
- Islands Act 2018
- Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (Relief from Additional Amount) Act 2018
- Management of Offenders Act 2019
- Non-Domestic Rates Act 2020
- Planning Act 2019
- Prescription Act 2018
- Referendums Act 2020
- Scottish Biometrics Commissioner Act 2020
- Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019
- Scottish Elections (Franchise and Representation) Act 2020
- Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020
- Scottish National Investment Bank Act 2020
- Social Security Act 2018
- South of Scotland Enterprise Act 2019
- Transport Act 2019
- UEFA European Championships Act 2020
- UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Legal Continuity) Bill
- Vulnerable Witnesses (Criminal Evidence) Act 2019
- Wild Animals in Travelling Circuses Act 2018

BILL SUMMARIES



Bills to be progressed this parliamentary year

Budget

The Bill will secure the Scottish Government's spending plans and allocation of resources to strategic objectives.

Domestic Abuse

The Bill will introduce emergency orders designed to protect people who are at risk of domestic abuse by imposing prohibitions or requirements on the person subject to the order which are necessary for the purpose of protecting the person at risk. An example would be a requirement to leave the home of the person at risk, and a prohibition on re-entering it while the order is in force.

The UNCRC (Incorporation) Bill

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the global "gold standard" for children's rights. The Scottish government is committed to further embedding the rights of children and young people, as enshrined in the UNCRC, through the delivery of new legislation. The UNCRC Incorporation Bill seeks to do this in two ways: to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law so that children and their representatives can vindicate their rights set out international law in our domestic courts; and to ensure that there is a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland.

The Bill will mean that children, young people and their families will experience public authorities consistently acting to uphold the rights of all children in Scotland. Public authorities, including Scottish Ministers, will be under a statutory duty not to act incompatibly with the UNCRC rights as set out in the Bill and rights holders will be able to challenge public authorities in the courts for breaches of their rights. The Bill will ensure that public authorities take proactive steps to ensure compliance with children's rights in their decision making and service delivery. This will build on existing structures which will enable children and young people to be heard and take an active role in their own lives and communities. Delivering the new legislation will improve outcomes for children and young people and help make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

University of St. Andrews (Degrees in Medicine and Dentistry)

The Bill will remove a legislative prohibition which currently prevents the University of St. Andrews from awarding medical and dentistry degrees. The Bill is being brought forward primarily to enable the University of St. Andrews to award, jointly with the University of Dundee, Primary Medical Qualifications to Scottish Graduate Entry Medicine (ScotGEM) MBChB students in advance of the first student cohort graduating in 2022. ScotGEM was announced by the First Minister in 2016 as part of a commitment to create a more sustainable medical workforce and encourage more people into a career in healthcare. The legislative barrier was put in place by the Universities Act 1966 to give effect to the immediate separation of Queen's College in Dundee from the University of St. Andrews in order to form the University of Dundee. As it serves no legitimate purpose in today's context, the Bill will seek to remove the legislative prohibition entirely for both medical and dentistry degrees, creating a fairer higher education sector in Scotland and enabling all of our valued institutions to maximise the options and opportunities they offer to students in Scotland.

UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity)

The Bill aims to provide a measure of continuity and stability in Scots law after the end of the EU exit transition period. It contains a discretionary power to align Scots law with EU law in devolved areas. The Bill will also ensure there continue to be guiding principles on the environment in Scotland and will establish an environmental governance body to secure full and effective implementation of environmental law.

Defamation and Malicious Publication

The Bill will simplify and modernise the law of defamation and provide a clear framework which more appropriately balances freedom of expression and protection of reputation.

Forensic Medical Services (Victims of Sexual Offences)

The Bill will underpin the ongoing work of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland's Rape and Sexual Assault Taskforce. The Bill provides a new legal basis for the carrying out of forensic medical examinations for victims of sexual crime, and in particular will establish a national self-referral model for victims who wish to have an examination without first reporting to the police. The Government wishes to give victims control over what happens to them at a time when it has been taken away.

Hate Crime and Public Order

The Bill consolidates, modernises and extends hate crime legislation in Scotland. It adds age as an additional characteristic and includes a power to enable the characteristic of 'sex' to be added at a later date. The Bill provides for new stirring up of hatred offences for age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics. Currently there are only offences of stirring up racial hatred.

Heat Networks

The Bill will introduce regulation to the heat network sector to support the development of district and communal heating networks. These systems are crucial to Scotland's response to the global climate emergency.

Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care)

The Bill seeks to establish a financial redress scheme for and in respect of survivors of historical child abuse in certain residential care settings in Scotland. The purpose of the scheme is to acknowledge and provide tangible recognition of harm suffered as a result of that abuse. The Bill also provides for access to some non-financial elements of redress including emotional and psychological support.

Social Security Administration and Tribunal Membership

The Bill addresses a small number of matters relating to social security administration and Tribunal membership, which need to be made in order to ensure the continued effective implementation of the Social Security Act 2018.



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