

SCOTTISH CAMPAIGN ON RIGHTS TO SOCIAL SECURITY: PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGE: UK GENERAL ELECTION 2019

What we believe in

We believe in a social security system that takes a human rights-based approach, prevents and reduces poverty, treats people with dignity and respect and supports everyone to flourish. To create this system, the members of SCORSS believe in the need to:

- Increase social security payment rates to a level where no one is left in poverty and all have sufficient income to lead a dignified life.
- Make respect for human rights and dignity the cornerstone of UK and Scottish social security.
- Radically simplify social security to ensure it is easy to access and that barriers to entitlement are removed.
- Invest in the support needed to enable everyone to participate fully in society
- Make social security work for Scotland

Why change is needed

Poverty and inequality can be solved, yet over one million people in Scotland are now living in the grip of poverty; struggling to feed and clothe themselves and their families, pay their bills or heat their homes. Changes to social security in recent years have had a particular impact on women, single parents, children, disabled people and black and minority ethnic groups.

The benefits freeze, the benefits cap, the two-child limit and a host of changes to the social security system over recent years, such as changes to eligibility, mean that not only have people's incomes been eroded in real terms over time, but that those who would have previously been better protected are now being pulled into poverty. This is unacceptable and cannot go on.

The changes we need

This general election, we are calling on all political parties – and the next UK Government – to commit to the changes that we need to build a UK social security system that provides adequate incomes and supports people to live in dignity.



Increase social security payment rates to a level where no one is left in poverty and all have sufficient income to lead a dignified life

Increase social security payments so that, in the longer-term, they contribute to everyone's income meeting at least the Minimum Income Standard.

End the five-week wait for Universal Credit, which has pushed people across the country into poverty and destitution.

Ensure that help with housing – whether through Local Housing Allowance, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit - reflects the real costs of housing for the individual.

- Provide better financial and other associated support for unpaid carers.
- End the two-child limit and its exemptions, which undermine women's rights, ignore the realities of choice in pregnancy and then punish women and their children with deeper poverty.
- Remove the benefit cap, which has led to debt, poverty and homelessness for many families.

Radically simplify social security to ensure it is easy to access and that barriers to entitlement are removed

- Increase the proportion of non-means tested financial support by:
 - Reinstating and restoring the value of Child Benefit to at least its 2010 value;
 - Ensuring that the state pension is sufficient to enable all pensioners to live in dignity;
 - Ending age discrimination by extending entitlement to adequate disability entitlements to older people.
- End the punitive application of conditionality and sanctions, which is ineffective, complex, costly and stigmatising.

Make respect for human rights and dignity the cornerstone of UK and Scottish social security

Embed a rights-based approach as the cornerstone of the UK social security system. This means that people's rights must be put at the centre of policy and practice.

Redesign ill-health and disability entitlements to put the individual's rights at the heart of the process, with capability for work and disability assessments the responsibility of those best placed to have a full understanding of the person's health and disability.

Invest in the support needed to enable everyone to participate in society

- Ensure that those who are too ill to work or have caring responsibilities get the support they need to engage in society fully and are not required to engage in inappropriate work-related activities, nor pushed into poverty.
- Ensure access to an independent income which meets individual needs and embeds equality within households.
- Make employment in social security and job seeking support services more fulfilling and better rewarded.

Make social security work for Scotland

- Maintain the 'no detriment' clause agreed by the Smith Commission to ensure claimants benefit from all new social security support developed under the Scottish social security system.
- Commit to working with the Scottish Government to ensure the smooth transition of devolved benefits, and to ensure sufficient levels of data-sharing to enable effective delivery of Scottish social security entitlements such as the Scottish Child Payment.

Supported by:



About the Scottish Campaign on Social Security

SCORSS is a diverse coalition of organisations working across Scotland with collective expertise on a range of different aspects of the social security system. Whilst coming from different areas of expertise, all members of SCORSS are united in our belief in a social security system that prevents poverty and supports those in need whilst also protecting their dignity.