



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Conveners
Scottish Parliament Committees
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Via email only

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP
Tel: 0131 348-5224
Calls via RNID Typetalk:
18001 0131 348-5224
Email: HSCS.committee@Parliament.Scot

28 September 2022

Dear Convener,

HSCS Committee inquiry into health inequalities

I am writing to make you aware that the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee has today published a report of the findings of its recent inquiry into health inequalities in Scotland.

The Committee's inquiry explored evidence that the fundamental causes of health inequalities lie largely outside the health system and cross-portfolio action is therefore needed to address health inequalities.

During the inquiry, we heard a range of evidence that policy-makers operating across a wide spectrum of different policy areas need to place a specific emphasis on tackling inequalities in policy development and implementation. These areas include housing, town planning, communities, transport, social security, employment rights, social justice, and education, as well as within recovery and renewal work, and as part of public service reform.

Our report sets out areas for future action at local, Scottish Government and UK Government levels, and highlights areas where further scrutiny may be required. Throughout the report the Committee draws areas to the attention of colleagues across all Scottish Parliament committees and notes where scrutiny in these areas is already underway. Attached at Annexe A is a list of recommendations we draw to the attention of individual Scottish Parliament committees, local authorities and the UK Government.

Next steps

We hope to work with all committees across the Parliament in the future to ensure there is a cross-committee approach to scrutinising work to tackle health inequalities and the broader societal inequalities underlying them.

We would like to invite colleagues from all Parliament committees, and the Scottish Parliament Bureau and Conveners' Group, to actively consider the areas highlighted in this report as they plan their future work programmes.

The Committee's predecessor, the Health and Sport Committee, invited Conveners across Scottish Parliament committees to join a debate on health inequalities on [26 March 2015](#). We would like to invite colleagues across all current Scottish Parliament committees, and the Scottish Government, to join us in a similar debate to discuss and set out commitments to prioritise an approach to action and scrutiny that would ensure an ongoing focus on tackling health inequalities going forward.

Next Steps

I would be grateful if you could consider those aspects of our report that may be relevant to your committee's remit and how opportunities for further scrutiny in relevant policy areas might be factored into your committee's future work programme.

As a further exercise in effective cross-committee scrutiny, I would also invite you to indicate whether you would be interested in contributing to a future committee debate on health inequalities, to be organised later this year or in early 2023.

I would appreciate your response to this letter by 28 October 2022.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Martin MSP
Convener, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Annexe A

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee health inequalities inquiry report

Recommendations

Referred to:	Section	Paragraph number of relevant recommendation
All Scottish Parliament Committees	Full report	Full report
Covid-19 Recovery Committee	Covid-19 pandemic	336
	Scottish Government strategy and action	390
Economy and Fair Work Committee	Employment	198
	Cost of living	350
Education, Children and Young People Committee	Education and the early years	169, 171
Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee	Health in all areas	234
Finance and Public Administration Committee	Community planning etc.	153
	Public services	222
Local Authorities	Full report	Full report
Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee	Housing	132, 133
	Community planning etc.	152
	Localities and communities	378
Scottish Affairs Select Committee	Scottish Government strategy and action	391
Scottish Parliament Bureau and	Cross-committee scrutiny	362

Conveners' Group		
Social Justice and Social Security Committee	Housing	134
	Carers	258
	Fundamental causes	270, 271
	Social security	303, 306
UK Govt	Employment	193, 196
	Health in all areas	235
	Informal caring as a social determinant of health	259
	Income	283, 284
	Social security	303, 304, 305, 306, 307
	Cost of living	347, 349
	Future scrutiny and action	354, 355
	Scottish Government strategy and action	391
UK Minister for social security	Social security	306