



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Shirley Anne Somerville MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Social
Justice
Scottish Government

Social Justice and Social Security Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Via email only

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17 May 2023

Dear Shirley Anne,

Social justice priorities

The Committee would like to congratulate you on your new post as Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice. We look forward to working with you over the remainder of this Parliamentary session to address social justice issues and on the delivery of devolved benefits.

With this key focus in mind, we acknowledge the emphasis the First Minister placed on poverty when he announced the Scottish Government's priorities to Parliament on 18 April 2023, including to "continue to tackle poverty in all its forms, and to substantially reduce child poverty in particular".¹

We also note the publication of the Scottish Government's "[Equality, opportunity, community: New leadership - A fresh start](#)", which sets out the social justice priorities. It would be helpful to us in identifying our priorities if you could, in advance of the Programme for Government, provide more detail on the social justice priorities within our remit and how these build on the actions already taken earlier in the session and how they differ from the previous approach.

Now that we are at the mid-point of the Parliamentary session, we have taken time to reflect on how we can bring greater scrutiny to the policies aimed at tackling social justice issues. We have today published a short report "[Scrutinising social justice](#):"

¹ Meeting of the Parliament, Official Report, [18 April 2023](#), col 12.

[barriers and opportunities](#)". It is a report which seeks to share learning and harness scrutiny efforts to ensure that policies aimed at progressing social justice are delivering.

Though the report is primarily aimed at committees, it does, also seek some further clarification from the Scottish Government on the following areas:

- Fairer Scotland Action Plan this Parliamentary session
- Minimum Income Guarantee interim report
- Transparency on achieving social justice outcomes
- Action taken to tackle long-standing, cross-cutting barriers to progressing social justice in Scotland

I look forward to hearing from you and would welcome a response by **17 July 2023**.

Yours sincerely



Collette Stevenson MSP
Convener
Social Justice and Social Security Committee