



A Manifesto for the Women of Scotland

Health Safety
Carers Museums
Learning Daycare Housing
Streetlights Childcare Community
Living Education
Outreach Roads Benefits
Debt Advice
Libraries
Nurseries
Parks

Local Government Elections 2012

This manifesto has been produced using the views of women throughout Scotland.

The information contained in this document can be used by women to raise awareness of issues – making sure family, friends and colleagues are aware of the concerns affecting women in Scotland today.

This document can be used to challenge Local Government election candidates regarding local priorities for women.

CHILDCARE

Women rate the provision of Local Authority nurseries and the overall provision of childcare in their areas as **adequate**.

"The cost of childcare is putting women off going back to work."

"I live in a rural area where childcare is not available."

What Women Want

Wraparound childcare in every area.

Women are unable to access education and employment due to restricted childcare provision. Childcare needs to be available which meets individual requirements.

Affordable childcare in every area.

Local authority nursery provision is limited and private nursery care is often expensive.

Accessible childcare in every area.

Rural Scotland accounts for 94% of the country's land mass. Women often have to travel long distances to access childcare.

DEBT AND BENEFIT ADVICE

What Women Want

Continued funding for Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Removal of these vital services will result in women not receiving local and accurate debt and benefit advice.

Support for the impact of UK Coalition Government Welfare Reform.

Changes to welfare benefit entitlements will result in women seeking priority advice regarding family income and debt provisions.

Women rate the provision of debt and benefit advice in their area as **fair / poor**.

Those who were aware of such services said they were **quite accessible**.

"Unless you know someone who has applied for benefits or has been through financial hardship, then it is difficult to know where to seek help."

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Barriers for girls/women in education are viewed as:

- Resources/Funding.
- Directing girls and women into traditional subject career choice.
- Opportunities for learning.
- Options to access Modern Apprenticeships.
- Subject choice.

"Many areas require transport provision and/or additional funding and resources to ensure women access a wide range of educational opportunities."

What Women Want

Encourage young women to study 'non-traditional' subjects.

Careers in non-traditional roles eg trades, science, engineering are often not considered due to lack of information and support.

Protect and maintain rural schools.

Closure of smaller schools in remote areas has an impact on the education of local children as well as having wider repercussions for the community as a whole.

Childcare provision

Lack of affordable, accessible childcare limits women's ability to access further and higher education.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- Daycare Services
- Maternity Support/Family Liaison
- Services for Young People

were rated by women as **inadequate**.

Mental Health Outreach was rated as both **inadequate** and **inconsistent**.

“The Council has to deal with ever deepening funding cuts and it is the poorest and most vulnerable in society who are paying.”

What Women Want

Equal access to maternity care provision in urban and rural areas.

Support and provision services need to be consistent across Scotland. Rural women travel excessive distances for hospital and specialist services.

Increased Mental Health service provision.

In some areas, provision is being withdrawn during a time of need. Due to increased social, economic and cultural pressures, many women are being referred to these vital community services.

More health and social care support for BME communities.

Service provision should take into account the diversity of Scotland’s population.

LEISURE AND CULTURE

What Women Want

More clubs and activities focussed on young people.

Local venues are required to support and involve young people in activities which encourage and interest them.

Continue funding for Sports and Leisure Centres.

Local Government support is required to sustain vital community services. In many areas, these resources are maintained by voluntary bodies.

Ensure appropriate infrastructure to access leisure and culture facilities.

A lack of accessible, affordable transport, particularly in rural areas, results in many women unable to use the facilities being offered.

In some local authority areas there is **no provision** for leisure and culture services such as:

- Art Galleries
- Community Centres/Hubs
- Parks
- Sports/Leisure Centres

Women rate the provision of learning centres as **inadequate**.

Clubs and Activities for Children and Young People are rated as both **inadequate** and **inconsistent**.

“Funding of these services should be about improving lives. Without availability of leisure and culture facilities, vital community resources will be lost.”

HOUSING

What Women Want

More investment in affordable housing.
A shortage of local social housing increases rents in the private sector.

More investment in current housing stock.
Local authority housing is in substandard condition in many Local Authority areas.

Simplification of Housing and Council Tax Benefits application processes.
Current systems are not user-friendly and many women require assistance when completing applications.

The most important housing issues for women are viewed as:

- Condition and location of existing council houses.
- Housing and Council Tax Benefit application processes.
- Allocation process for Social Housing.
- Limited availability of accommodation for the elderly and disabled.

"More properties need to be built – and fast".

"Make processes less difficult and less competitive."

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) AND WOMEN'S SAFETY

Provisions which need to be put in place to ensure and improve women's safety are:

1. Awareness of VAW throughout communities.
2. Access to VAW Services.
3. Community Regeneration (e.g. better street lighting, roads, walkways etc).
4. Community warden / Police patrols

"These are vital places of safety and women are having to jump through hoops to access them."

What Women Want

Ensure appropriate levels of funding for women's support services i.e. Women's Aid and Rape Crisis.

These services provide vital support and encouragement ensuring the safety of women and their children.

Ensure that women in all areas of the country have access to VAW services.

The removal / reduction of service workers, particularly in rural areas, results in women being unable to access support.

Raise issues of VAW throughout the community.

Community centres, libraries, doctors surgeries etc must continue to provide information on local / national services and support available to vulnerable women.

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) is funded to engage with women throughout Scotland in order that their views might influence public policy. This is achieved in a number of different ways – through roadshow, round table, conference and celebratory events. Following each event a report is compiled and issued to women who attend and relevant policy and decision makers.