

2020

SCOTTISH
WOMEN'S
CONVENTION
ANNUAL
UPDATE



THE SCOTTISH WOMEN'S COVENTION

Who Are We:

The Scottish Women's Convention (SWC) is funded by the Scottish Government to engage with women throughout Scotland in order that their views might influence public policy. This is undertaken in a variety of ways including Roadshow events, Thematic Conferences and regional contact groups.

After consulting with women across the country, the SWC uses their views to respond to a variety of Parliamentary, Governmental and organisational consultation papers at both a Scottish and UK level. This allows for the real lived experiences of women to have a positive impact on the policy making agenda in Scotland and beyond.

Our main objectives are to:

- ◆ **Consult with women and use their voices as part of the engagement process.**
- ◆ **Ensure all policy and decision making authorities take account of women's equality.**
- ◆ **Recognise and highlight the potential impacts which policies have on women.**
- ◆ **Promote the needs of different groups of women.**
- ◆ **Actively pursue solutions which look to achieve equality for women.**

Agnes Tolmie, SWC Chair

“Here at the SWC, we have been working throughout this year to continue gathering women’s voices and ensure they are still key in decision making processes. As with all other organisations, we have had to drastically change the ways in which we work and gather information at a faster pace than ever before.

We have seen our engagement with women go from strength to strength throughout 2020 and we do not intend to slow down as we go into a new year. As an organisation, we pride ourselves on gaining women’s experiences directly, particularly those who are so often missed or overlooked. Women have shown how much they not only value but need to have their experiences used to inform how policy is made here in Scotland.

Going forward, the SWC is keen to stress we will continue to build engagement with women across Scotland—in whatever format that may be—and work to ensure women’s equality is placed front and centre.”

SWC BOARD

AGNES TOLMIE, CHAIR

SUZANNE CONLIN

SARAH CUMMING

PATRICIA DONNELLY

GIRIJAMBA POLUBOTHU

ELSPET ANGUS

MARGARET LANCE

SWC STAFF

EVELYN FRASER

SUSAN MCKELLAR

SHAIRI BOWES

MARY BETH GRAHAM

CAROLINE THOMSON
(RETIRED)

ANN SCULLION (RETIRED)

Welcome to our new team members

This year the SWC welcomed a new staff and board member to the team: Susan McKellar has taken on the role of Operations Manager whilst Margaret Lance joins the SWC Board.

Susan McKellar

Susan's main role at the SWC is to be an ambassador promoting the work of the organisation. As Operations Manager, she will be working with the team, helping them to deliver events and ensure that the voices of women all over Scotland are represented in the reports which are produced. Her role is also to engage with key stakeholders, such as politicians and key decision makers, to support initiatives driven by the SWC

Susan spent 5 years representing parents who did not have a voice and projected that at a national level with Parent Network Scotland. She is the new Glasgow representative for the National Parent Forum for Scotland. She has a huge interest in trauma and mental health and is part of the cross-party group on prevention and healing of adverse childhood experiences.



Margaret Lance

Margaret brings a range of skills and experience within the field of women's rights, advice and community work to the SWC Board through working with adults and young people on a wide range of issues. Fluent in French and English, Margaret is skilled in teaching languages as well as using this in her role as a Community Education Practitioner within diverse communities, particularly in helping women and their families.

Margaret currently works at Waverley Care as a Health Improvement Coordinator which includes raising awareness around HIV and delivering information about transmission, prevention, and testing, including antenatal testing. As part of her role, she is passionate about women's rights and delivers workshops and services on HIV prevention and gender-based violence. She has also used her range of skills to raise money for global causes including children's rights and is Chair of Women in Action Global.



SWC 2020 Highlights



January

Launch of Scotland
2020: Priorities for
Women & Equality

February

Conference: "Do
Women in Scotland
want another
Referendum?"

March

SWC International
Women's Day at the
Scottish Parliament

April

Launch of Covid-19
virtual resources
and "SWC Women
Together" Virtual
Space

May

Virtual Roadshows
across Scotland

June

Launch of
Experiences of 2020
Blog

July

Launch of Women
& Social Care:
Experiences

August

Launch of Universal
Basic Income &
Women's
Experiences

September

Conferences:
"Women & Social
Care"

October

Publication of
"Snapshots for
Women"

November

Conferences:
"Women & Mental
Health"

December

Publication of
"Women's Voices
Represented -
Programme for
Government"

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2020: 'WOMEN AND DEMOCRACY'



Linda Fabiani MSP,
Deputy Presiding Officer

For over 10 years, women from throughout Scotland have enjoyed International Women's Day in the Scottish Parliament. On Saturday 7 March 2020, over 380 women joined the SWC to celebrate with the theme: "Women and Democracy"



Rt. Hon. Nicola Sturgeon MSP,
First Minister of Scotland



Agnes Tolmie,
SWC Chair



Patricia McKeown,
Regional Secretary of UNISON



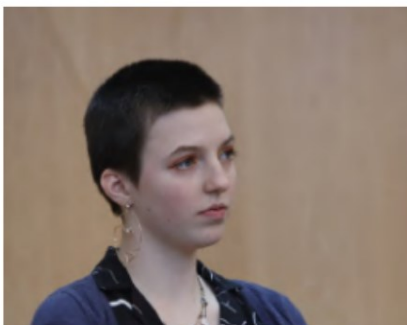
Ann Henderson,
Rector of the University of Edinburgh



Christina McKelvie MSP,
Minister for Older People & Equalities



Margaret Lance,
Waverley Care



Tess Corcoran,
Scottish Youth Climate Strike



Margaret Cochrane,
Friends of Peoples Palace Winter Gardens

*Women &
Democracy
2020*



Conferences

2020

The current circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic have turned our lives upside down. We recognise that each woman will have a unique experience of this time. It has remained the SWC's top priority to engage with women across the country, listening to issues and concerns and bringing women together to empower them.

Do Women In Scotland want another Independence Referendum?

The SWC held our last in-person Conference in February, bringing women together for discussions as to whether or not another Scottish Independence Vote should happen. All sides of the debate gathered to ensure a uniquely women-centred perspective and to voice their own opinions and experiences. This allowed women to come to a fully informed decision regarding the topic. The SWC also collated responses from an online survey around this to ensure women who could not attend still had their voices heard.

Women & Social Care

Across Summer 2020, the SWC undertook work regarding women's experiences of social care in Scotland. This included digital roundtables, online surveys, submissions and phone interviews. We held our first online conferences on this area with two events, starting in September. We wanted to cover social care before and during the pandemic and what needs to change to make social care work for everyone. We supported our full Conference Report with various other documents to cover the wealth of information gained, including lived experiences and further information for women.

Women & Mental Health

In late October, the SWC brought women together for an event covering mental health. We wanted to cover the many different and complex aspects of this topic and the ways it impacts women across Scotland. This year has been incredibly challenging, and the SWC aims to gather voices of women to shape the way responses to mental health are designed as we move forward. Due to overwhelming demand, we held a further conference, continuing to gather information from women and explore further opportunities.



Highlights

2020

The high level of engagement from women up and down Scotland has been incredible this year and inspired the SWC to create a host of new ways to keep this going, including an online Coronavirus Resources Page and various briefing papers of women's experiences and needs.

“Experiences of 2020” Blogs

As the country moved to online forms of communication in 2020, the SWC launched a series of blogs. This showcased the differing realities of what 2020 meant for women from lockdown to easing of restrictions.

Women wanted to be involved, with blogs being launched weekly. This led to a virtual blog takeover by female members of the Scottish Youth Parliament throughout the month of November.

Virtual Roadshows

Our Spring Calendar of Digital Roadshows took the SWC to locations across Scotland via video conference calls. Women discussed what was happening in their local communities in response to the pandemic, highlighting strong areas of support, causes for concern and what is needed going forward. The SWC have strived to ensure women who could not attend these digital events were included by using other forms of communication including phone interviews and online one to ones. These views were incorporated into reports based on local areas and fed back to policy makers.

Universal Basic Income

Throughout the year, the SWC continued to hear from women about the prospect of Scotland introducing a Universal Basic Income payment to all as a way to combat poverty and inequality. Following this, an evidence gathering exercise was undertaken to capture women's views.

There was an overwhelming level of engagement and a report covering how UBI could benefit women's equality going forward was produced. We continue to consult with policymakers around this.



The SWC has also been working with decision makers and politicians to make a difference to women and their families. This has seen huge positive changes in policy and legislation which will impact not only in the present, but for many years to come.

***Period Products
(Free Provision)
(Scotland) Bill***

This ground breaking piece of legislation was unanimously passed in the Scottish Parliament on 24 November 2020.

The SWC worked with Monica Lennon MSP and other women's organisations to ensure that no woman suffers from a lack of education or employment opportunities because she cannot pay for sanitary products.

***Free School Meals
during School
Holidays***

Women constantly talk to the SWC about the hardship of providing meals during the days when children are at home. This is particularly acute during school holidays. We reported this to government officials through our roadshow reports and consultation responses.

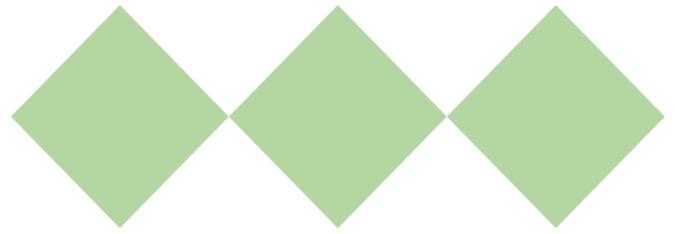
The SWC were delighted to report back to those women that the Scottish Government have put in place a new initiative. Those who receive free school meals during term time will also receive them during holiday periods up until the end of March. This will go a long way in easing the financial burden on many women.

***Scottish Child
Payment***

The SWC has been working with the new Scottish Social Security Agency in several areas of the benefits being devolved to Scotland. We are active members of many of the Advisory Groups.

The new Scottish Child Payment has recently been announced. This weekly payment of £10 for every child under 6 years of age will go a long way in helping ease financial hardship for many women.

PUBLICATIONS



SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Call for Views: Advisory Group on Economic Recovery.

Consultation on Early Learning and Childcare Statutory Guidance.

Consultation on a Ministerial Statement for Modifying Local Connection Referrals in Scotland.

Equally Safe: A Consultation on Challenging Men's Demand for Prostitution, Working to Reduce the Harms Associated with Prostitution and Helping Women to Exit.

Free Bus Travel for people resident in Scotland aged under 19.

Housing to 2040: Consultation on Outline Policy Options.

Replacement of EU Structural Funds.

Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030- Draft Public Consultation.

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 - Updated Statutory Guidance Consultation.

Social Security Draft Equality Outcomes.

UK GOVERNMENT

UK Government Call for Evidence: Support in the Workplace for Victims of Domestic Abuse.

UK Government Consultation: Carer's Leave.

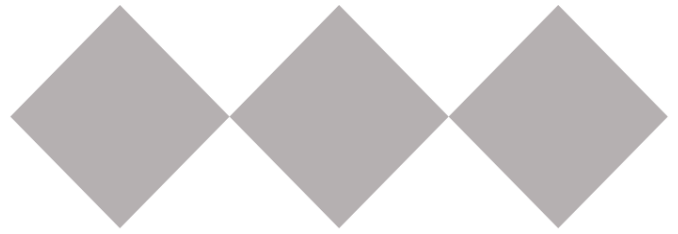
UK Government HMRC Charter Consultation.

Westminster Scottish Affairs Committee: Welfare Policy in Scotland.

Westminster Women and Equalities Select Committee: Call for Evidence: Body Image

Westminster Women and Equalities Select Committee: Call for Evidence: Coronavirus and the Impact on People with Protected Characteristics.

PUBLICATIONS



SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee -COVID-19: Economic Impact on Young People.

Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee: Call for Views on the Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-Restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Bill.

Equalities and Human Rights Committee Inquiry: Covid-19.

Equalities and Human Rights Committee: Draft Budget Scrutiny.

Equalities and Human Rights Committee: Incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Justice Committee Call for Views: Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill.

Private Member's Bill: Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill.

Private Member's Bill: Proposed Right to Food (Scotland) Bill.

Social Security Committee: Covid-19 and Social Security.

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee: Consultation on the Draft Proposal to amend the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner Act 2002.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

The Ethical Standards Commissioner for Scotland: Prospective Code Revisions.

The Low Pay Commission: National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW) rates, applied April 2021.

The Social Renewal Advisory Board: What Needs to Change to Build a Fairer Scotland?

Town Centre Action Plan Expert Review Group: Call for Written Evidence.

THANK YOU!

THE SWC EXTENDS ITS THANKS TO:

THOMPSONS SOLICITORS
THE DRINKS BAKERY
SEILICH
SHETLAND SOAP COMPANY
RISOTTO
TUNNOCKS
CAORUNN
DEAR GREEN
SHETLAND REEL
NAIRNS
STAFF AT THE HILTON GROSVENOR HOTEL

GLASGOW TAXIS
LEIGH ELIZABETH STUDIO
UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION
FIRE BRIGADES UNION
NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS
GMB UNION
UNITE THE UNION (FINANCE & LEGAL)
EIS
MACKAYS
WYLIE & BISSET, CHARTERED
ACCOUNTANTS

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS.
YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

