



Scottish Policy Forum

NEWSLETTER

June 2019

In the last two weeks, all the policy commissions have been meeting to identify the key issues for further consideration. In this newsletter, we outline some of these issues to help SPF delegates and others in their engagement activities.



SPF Chair, Lesley Laird MP says:

"Despite the gap in party meetings during the European elections, there are still a couple of months to organise events and submit evidence to the First Stage consultation.

We know that the main reason members join Scottish Labour is to influence policy development. So, this is a real organising opportunity to engage your members in the manifesto process for 2021.

We are looking for the best ideas to address the big challenges we face in Scotland. We need to tap into the knowledge and experiences of our members, to develop our policies."

Health and Care

With NHS community services and social care delegated to integration authorities, there is a [concern](#) that these bodies are [not working](#) well. They have become a conduit for service cuts and don't have the resources to take preventative action. As a consequence, social care is in crisis, and too many people remain in hospital when they don't need to be there.

Given the institutional clutter, would structural reform help to tackle these issues? Do we need greater consistency across Scotland with a national care service or national frameworks, which would still allow care teams to respond to local need?

Communities

While most people agree that we need greater community engagement, there is less consensus around how this can be achieved. Too many initiatives are seen as a way of passing on the cuts onto communities and allow better-resourced groups to dominate discussions.

How can we build stronger communities and support active local engagement? Would structural [reform](#) of local government and the quango state into more [local units](#) help? Or can we build stronger [social infrastructure](#) that would enable resilient, democratic communities of place and interest?

Education

There is [evidence](#) that starting formal schooling later is best. Many countries, such as Sweden and Finland, have better academic achievement and child well-being, despite children not starting school until age 7. Before that age, early learning is constructed around play, blending into full-time learning. Should Scotland move in this direction?

Inclusive education (mainstreaming) has broad support, but there are [concerns](#) about [resourcing](#) and specialist support. How can this policy be better supported?

Modern apprenticeships can be of variable quality with some evidence of funding abuse. How can we strengthen workplace learning and tackle [gender](#) segregation?

SEAS are holding an open meeting to engage with three young Labour party researchers in education including Barry Black on subject choice; Ross McArthur on a different kind of senior phase; Eireann McAuley Mental Health in schools.

Saturday, August 17th at 10:30 - George Suite, Millennium Hotel, George Square, Glasgow

Economy

Labour is committed to tackling environmental challenges in ways that enable us to deliver good jobs and productive industries. The Green Industrial Revolution [consultation](#) seeks views on these plans. Energy unions have [published](#) a ten-point plan for a Just Transition.

The New Zealand Labour government has [unveiled](#) a 'well-being' budget focused on long-standing inequality issues. Portugal has shown that anti-austerity budgets can work. What can we learn from these approaches?

Bus routes, staff numbers and journeys are falling while prices rise. Scottish Labour's plan involves re-regulation, common ownership and free travel for all under 25s. The ambition is to go further with a universal service free at the point of use.



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Engagement Toolkit

Cross-Cutting Issues

The consultation papers have to group issues in a manageable way. However, we recognise that many issues cut across these headings. A good example is climate change, and we will produce a separate paper on this once the current legislation has completed its parliamentary progress.

Another is drugs policy. Many people and organisations now believe that Scotland's [drug crisis](#) requires a radical shift in policy and attitudes so that drug use is treated as a public health issue rather than a criminal act - as it is in several European [countries](#). What changes should we make to Scotland's drug policy to seriously address the drugs crisis?

Our dedicated policy web site www.scotlabpolicy.org has a range of resources to assist SPF members, CLPs and affiliates in contributing to our policy development. Copies of the First Stage consultation papers can be downloaded, together with an Engagement Toolkit and other materials. Members can also use the Community [Forum](#) to post short contributions.