



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice  
Scottish Government

**07 November 2024**

Dear Cabinet Secretary

### Addressing child poverty through parental employment report – Follow up

The Social Justice and Social Security Committee published its inquiry [report](#) in November 2023. It contains 34 recommendations and requests for action across a range of themes. The Committee received a [response against each recommendation from the Scottish Government](#) on 22 January 2024.

On 14 March 2024, a Scottish Parliament [debate](#) on the report took place and some of the recommendations and responses were raised by the Convener and Members of committees with a relevant remit.

For the inquiry, its report, and the recommendations to have a meaningful impact, the Committee intends to continue to hold the Scottish Government to account for its progress on the relevant policy areas to the end of the session.

### Progress update a year on from publication of the report

Please find below a list of recommendations the Scottish Government has responded to and on which the Committee would welcome an update.

#### Childcare

The Committee would welcome an update on the Scottish Government's work to "develop an expanded national offer for more families with two-year-olds, focusing on those who will benefit most", including the outcomes of its engagement with partners in the childcare sector, pilots and support to local authorities<sup>i</sup>

The Committee would also be interested in an update on the Scottish Government's progress in increasing the number of childminders in rural areas, including the impact of the recruitment pilots led by the Scottish Childminding Association.

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Contact: Social Justice and Social Security Committee, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP. Email [SJSS.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:SJSS.committee@parliament.scot). We welcome calls through Relay UK and in BSL through Contact Scotland BSL.

Information on progress to improve childcare support for children with ASN would also be helpful, including:

- Progress since ASN has been introduced as a standalone unit within the Scottish Qualifications Authority's Next Generation Higher National Childhood Practice award pilot
- Progress on the identification of gaps as part of the review of the National Occupation Standards.
- An update on the development of case studies in collaboration with the Improvement Service to highlight how the expansion of funded ELC is supporting children with ASN to access high quality funded ELC.

## **Employability**

The Scottish Government committed “to publishing a breakdown of employability funding per Local Authority for the coming financial year once budget processes have concluded, with specific detail of investment targeted towards parental employability included.”<sup>ii</sup> The Committee asks the Scottish Government to provide the detail of the investment targeted towards parental employability to inform the reports' recommendations as well as its budget scrutiny.

## **Transport**

As well as issues around childcare, the report highlighted transport issues specific to rural areas and the Committee would welcome an update on investment in Demand Responsive Transport to improve public transport and connectivity in rural areas.<sup>iii</sup> In June 2024, the last Best Start Bright Future [progress report](#) referred to the evaluation of a range of projects concluding in 2024-25. The Committee would welcome an update on the evaluation and findings from the projects.

## **Education – financial support for part-time students**

In its response to the Committee on financial support for part-time students, the Scottish Government agreed action was needed and that “it would undertake a review of student support for part-time learners to improve the parity of support on offer, especially for those who are returning to learning and may have other caring or work-related responsibilities.”<sup>iv</sup>

We are aware the Education, Children and Young People Committee has also highlighted the lack of equality between part-time and full-time students in relation to financial support as part of [its pre-budget scrutiny](#). We are therefore looking forward to getting further details on the work being undertaken to address issues faced by part-time learners and provide financial support.

## **Education – Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)**

In relation to the future of ITAs, the Scottish Government indicated in its response to the Committee that no decision had been made on their continuation or level of funding because of budget challenges<sup>v</sup>. The Committee would benefit from an update on the matter.

We would appreciate a response by 9 December 2024.

Yours sincerely,



**Bob Doris MSP**  
**Deputy Convener**  
**Social Justice and Social Security Committee**

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<sup>i</sup> Scottish Government Response to the Addressing Child Poverty Through Parental Employment Report, p5

<sup>ii</sup> Scottish Government Response to the Addressing Child Poverty Through Parental Employment Report, p11

<sup>iii</sup> Scottish Government Response to the Addressing Child Poverty Through Parental Employment Report, p10

<sup>iv</sup> Scottish Government Response to the Addressing Child Poverty Through Parental Employment Report, p12

<sup>v</sup> Scottish Government Response to the Addressing Child Poverty Through Parental Employment Report, p20