



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **SOCIAL SECURITY COMMITTEE**

By email:

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29 March 2018

Dear Paul

Thank you for your letter of 26 January 2018, inviting the Committee to outline the actions it is taking that relate to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Scottish Parliament Social Security Committee's role is to scrutinise the Scottish Government's work on Social Security, and to hold the Government to account. We do this through scrutinising proposed legislation and investigating relevant issues.

Our work relates primarily to Sustainable Development Goals:

- 1 – No Poverty
- 2 – Zero Hunger
- 10 – Reduced Inequalities.

### **Social Security Bill**

Currently, we are scrutinising the Social Security Bill. We listened to a wide range of people from across Scotland at workshops and Committee meetings between June and October 2017.

In December 2017 we published our report<sup>i</sup> with our views and recommendations, to inform Parliament's first debate on the bill. Our recommendations included:

- The creation of an independent Scottish Social Security Advisory Committee on a statutory basis.
- Clarifying the legal status of the Bill's guiding principles.
- Specifying the mechanism for redress if an individual feels their treatment has not been compatible with the Social Security Charter.
- Clarifying that cash will be the default form of assistance.
- Providing a right to independent advocacy for individuals applying for assistance.

The Bill was amended by the Committee in early 2018. Amendments included:

- A principle stating that the delivery of social security is a public service.
- A duty on Scottish Ministers to promote take-up.
- A right to advocacy for individuals with a mental disorder applying for social security assistance.
- A restriction on private-sector involvement in medical assessments.
- A Scottish Commission on Social Security established on a statutory basis.

The Bill is due to be debated by Parliament after Easter 2018. If passed at that point, it will become law.

Going forward, the Committee will scrutinise the detail of each form assistance as these are developed by the Government and laid before the Parliament (as Regulations).

### **Child Poverty Act 2017**

We also scrutinised the Child Poverty Bill during its passage through Parliament in 2017. Key amendments agreed by the Committee were:

- Interim targets which must be met by 31 March 2024.
- A statutory Poverty and Inequality Commission.
- Detailed delivery plans for 2018-22, 2022-26, 2026-31.
- Consultation with people with direct experience of poverty and with Parliament during the preparation of delivery plans.
- Ministers must make a statement in Parliament before each delivery plan starts.

Going forward, the Committee will scrutinise the details of the Government's Child Poverty Delivery Plans.

### **Inquiries**

Lastly, we undertake inquiries on relevant issues. For example, this year we will investigate benefit uptake, the Scottish Welfare Fund, the passporting of benefits, the citizens' income pilots, and foodbanks, in-work poverty and the rollout of Universal Credit.

Yours sincerely,

Clare Adamson

**CLARE ADAMSON MSP**  
**CONVENER**

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<sup>i</sup> <https://digitalpublications.parliament.scot/Committees/Report/SC/2017/12/11/Stage-1-Report-on-the-Social-Security--Scotland--Bill>