



5 KEY QUESTIONS FOR SCOTLAND'S NEXT FIRST MINISTER



DEAR *FUTURE* FIRST MINISTER,

We hope you agree that a key goal for Scotland's next First Minister must be to drive progress towards a Scotland that's free from the injustices of poverty and gender inequality, whilst bolstering our contribution to achieving the same outcomes globally.

These challenges are big: at a time of deep and growing wealth inequality in Scotland, one in five people lived in poverty even before the cost-of-living crisis. At the same time, around the world, extreme poverty is increasing for the first time in 25 years and the climate breakdown created by rich countries, like Scotland, is fuelling droughts, cyclones and floods and forcing people from their homes.

We believe that Scotland's next First Minister must therefore be brave and visionary whilst, crucially, delivering meaningful change. Encouragingly, many of the building blocks for progress exist in Scotland, but delivery at scale and speed is too often missing.

We therefore pose five key questions for whoever becomes Scotland's next First Minister:

1. WILL YOU FULLY VALUE AND INVEST IN CARE AND ALL THOSE WHO PROVIDE IT IN SCOTLAND?

We need more action to fully value and invest in care. Right now, too many women – because almost all are – live in poverty because they look after someone. The cost-of-living crisis is making life even harder. Yet without the people who care for our children, our sick, elderly or disabled, our economy and country would grind to a halt. Carers' contributions to our society cannot remain largely invisible.

Will you act upon the call from '[A Scotland That Cares](#)', the campaign for a dedicated new National Outcome on Care in Scotland, and ensure carers, and all those who are cared for, are central to your vision for success – and your plans for Government?

2. WILL YOU RENEW AND DEEPEN SCOTLAND'S CLIMATE CREDIBILITY?

Around the world, people's homes and lives are being destroyed by climate-induced disasters, yet the Scottish Government's own advisers say Scotland's climate targets are "in danger of becoming meaningless". This cannot be allowed to continue. A just transition is vital. But, unless this happens quickly, it will not deliver justice for those already impacted by Scotland's climate negligence.

Your government's rhetoric on cutting emissions must be matched by meeting rather than missing its own targets. This will require huge new investment in climate action [funded by making polluters pay](#). We think you must also unequivocally oppose any new planet-wrecking oil and gas developments. Such action is critical if Scotland's role as global champion of climate justice is to remain credible.

3. WILL YOU DELIVER ON PROMISES OF GLOBAL SOLIDARITY?

Successive Scottish Governments have matched the public's willingness to support people facing the world's worst humanitarian disasters – like those suffering hunger across [East Africa](#). They've also invested in long-term projects to challenge poverty. Global leadership on Loss & Damage finance to support people on the frontline of the climate crisis has also been welcomed by many.

Yet, amid unprecedented [global crises](#), Scotland's solidarity has never been more important. Will you increase Scotland's financial help, as promised, while strongly challenging the key drivers that are keeping people locked in poverty?

4. WILL YOU MAKE *REAL* PROGRESS ON BUILDING A 'WELLBEING ECONOMY'?

To realise the 'wellbeing economy' your government seeks, we must move away from a reliance on limited economic metrics like GDP to focus on enabling all people in Scotland to meet their needs, without damaging our environment. And we must do so in ways that do not undermine the chance for people in other countries, as well future generations everywhere, to meet their needs too.

The review of [Scotland's National Outcomes](#) and the upcoming [Wellbeing and Sustainable Development \(Scotland\) Bill](#) provide big opportunities to help re-prioritise so that everyone can thrive and prosper, with no one left behind – whether in Scotland, or internationally. Will you cling to the failed models of the past, or lead Scotland towards a new future built upon collective wellbeing?

5. WILL YOU DO MORE THAN TWEAK TAX TO HELP TACKLE INEQUALITY AND END POVERTY?

Delivering on the above priorities will require increased investment, as well as sustained and deep political will. So, our final key test is whether you will do more than just tweak tax. You must move beyond the timid tax policy of recent years, and instead pull every lever to introduce [bold, progressive taxation](#) that targets under-taxed wealth and makes polluters pay for their climate damage.

With continuing high levels of economic inequality, tax policy must do more to redistribute while generating the extra revenues needed to invest in public services, to protect people from poverty – particularly carers and children, and to deliver faster climate action.

Poverty isn't inevitable, in Scotland or anywhere else. As our next First Minister, you must commit to ending this injustice for good.