

MY SCOTTISH AFFAIRS 2020 SURVEY RESPONSES

My Scottish Affairs 2020

- On 8 July the Committee launched a call for ideas for any topic for which policy is governed by Westminster, including but not limited to areas such as defence, trade and immigration.
- The first My Scottish Affairs Inquiry, held in 2017, received more than 130 ideas submitted from members of the public. Digital Connectivity in Scotland was selected from these suggestions to become the subject of a full inquiry, with the report published in July 2018.
- Participants were asked the following questions:
 - i. What policy area does your idea relate to?
 - ii. Sum up your idea in 10 words;
 - iii. Please outline the issue you would like the Committee to look at;
 - iv. Why does this issue deserve attention?

Responses

- The Committee received over 80 responses to its survey which are listed by topic below.

Finance, grants and employment

- **Excluded businesses from Covid-19 funding.** The UK Government Covid-19 grant schemes flagged up huge gaps and many people, including myself have not had any support since March 2020. The Scottish Government has an opportunity to fill these gaps however have failed to act after MP's and MSP's have written to highlight this disparity. The funding schemes have deliberately failed tax payers from Self Employed Sole Traders, like myself, to PAYE Freelancers and new starters. *Janice Ellen Maciver*
- **Grants to local councils to re-energise High Streets** You only have to travel through many towns to see High Streets dying before our very eyes. If local councils were able to reduce commercial rates for a period of time letting people find their feet and establish themselves. Also help towns to set up pop-up shops and spaces for short periods of



time as a retail outlets. Out of town shopping and on-line shopping are both killing High Streets the recent covid outbreak has had everyone shopping on-line the government helped the hospitality industry with the eat for half price scheme how about rent for half price scheme?? Just look around you're local High Streets in the constituency you represent, the problem is there right in front of you. *Elaine Monro*

- **Newly self-employed grant.** The newly self-employed grant only covered a small amount of us. I was excluded due to needing universal credit to stay afloat I haven't reached £1000 over the last 4 months. I paid my tax Via CIS as a subcontractor when will we be getting the support we deserve. Because we have been discriminated because of our age and how long we've ran our business. Discrimination is never ok especially by the people who we vote for. *Neil Millar*

Constitutional Affairs and devolution

- **Functioning of the UK internal market post-Brexit**

The Scottish Affairs Committee in the previous parliament examined the issue of intra-UK governmental relations - an issue which has become increasingly pronounced through the negotiations to exit the EU and the future relationship with the EU. As was concluded by the Committee at that time, the adequate functioning of the Joint Ministerial Committee, common frameworks arrangements and general trust and political relations between the governments is vital to support the devolved settlement and the continued operation of the UK internal market outside the EU. NFUS believes that following the publication of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy White Paper on the UK Internal Market (UKIM), this is an important moment to revisit the inquiry of the previous session. The inquiry should:

- Examine the importance of the UKIM to Scotland on a sector-by-sector basis
- Take evidence from devolved and the UK government on progress with the development of common frameworks
- Examine the potential for regulatory divergence between the UK administrations, and implications of this on a sector-by-sector basis
- Aim to make recommendations on measures to ensure the continued function of the UKIM
- Review the recommendations given in the previous session on

intergovernmental relations with a view to updating them in light of the most recent political developments. The adequate functioning of the UK internal market is vital for the agricultural, and many other, sector of the Scottish/UK economy.

The unforeseen publication of the BEIS White Paper proposals on the UKIM has sparked a backlash from devolved administrations and NFU Scotland amongst other stakeholders have suggested that the UKIM proposals are superfluous to the long-established negotiations on common frameworks. The issue has become somewhat politicised between the UK and devolved administrations, to the disadvantage of industry which requires clarity on the continued function of the UK internal market following the end of transition. NFU Scotland believes that the Scottish Affairs Committee, as the body examining issues specific to Scotland as a devolved nation in Westminster, is well placed to:

- Examine the areas of agreement and disagreement between the UK and devolved administrations
- Gather stakeholder evidence on the key areas where industry requires clarity
- Take evidence on the progress with common frameworks negotiations
- Examine the potential capacity for regulatory divergence between the UK and devolved administrations further to the common frameworks negotiations and the UKIM proposals
- Examine potential consequences of proposed Holyrood legislation that would make Scotland 'keep pace' with the EU with or without common frameworks/UKIM legislation in place. *NFU Scotland*

- **Constitutional Affairs**

- (a) How can devolved legislatures influence trade agreements?
- (b) How are the UK and Scottish policy voices heard in Brussels?
- (c) The operation of the Sewel Convention
- (d) Intergovernmental dispute resolution between UK and Scotland
- (e) Measures to strengthen the consideration of disputes about devolved consent at Westminster

- (f) To investigate the extent to which the legal systems of the devolved jurisdictions are adequately consulted and represented in matters relevant to international organisations and international instruments

These issues are of significance to people in Scotland and across the UK. They affect the constitutional arrangements relating to issues which affect everyday life. They also touch on the relationship between the Governments in different parts of the UK which will be of increasing importance as we enter the Post-Brexit environment. In our view these issues will provide an agenda for inquiries on topics which will have deep impact on the future of Scotland and deserve the attention of the Scottish Affairs Committee. *The Law Society of Scotland*

- **Power grab of devolved competencies.** I and many others are deeply deeply concerned at the proposed power grab of devolved competencies by an unelected body for an internal UK market. As long as Scotland remains part of the UK Scots should not be forced to accept chlorinated chicken, hormone/antibiotic tainted beef/milk nor trade deals that open NHS Scotland to predatory us corporations. Scotland did not vote for Brexit and should not be forced to accept lower standards and loss of devolved powers as a result. Andy Watson
- **Abolish the Scottish Parliament and devolution.** Whether it would be feasible for devolution to be abolished and for the constituent nations of the UK to be governed from their related Offices, as was done before 1999. The very future of the UK is at stake. Since the introduction of devolution, the Constitution of the UK has become ever weaker from threats by separatism. The authority of regional parliaments and assemblies is just another layer of bureaucracy that has undermined the integrity of the UK Parliament. It's no wonder why separatism is at an all-time high. *Roberto Gino Salvia*
- **End the failed Blairite experiment of Scottish Devolution.** Devolution has resulted in a Parliament dominated by minority issues, additional costs and bureaucracy, the highest levels of income tax in the UK and an incompetent SNP government that has no real opposition. The Scottish people have rejected the idea of independence yet they are still subjected to speeches by the First Minister that invariably include the words, 'an independent Scotland could...' If independence has been rejected by the people of Scotland,



there is little need for this sham Parliament to continue. Scotland has been put in danger by devolution and is essentially a country run by a minority government that promotes and supports minority viewpoints instead of governing for the benefit of all the people of Scotland. The Parliament has completely failed to scrutinise and criticise the failures of the SNP administration. So I would like the Committee to discuss how it can hand over power to the Scotland Office as soon as possible. The Covid-19 response has shown that the Scottish Parliament does not have had the financial resources to respond to a national crisis or to support economic recovery. The FM has used the crisis every day for political ambition and every time she speaks shows that she has no power and no ability to bring to the table anything that will benefit Scotland. It is quite shocking that during this crisis the main thing on SNP's radar was a hate crimes bill and an attempt to end trial by jury. And as we watch our economy become more unstable because of this illegal lockdown, the best that SNP can do is blame Westminster and seek borrowing powers while discussing a further increase in taxation. Devolution needs to be put out of its misery as quickly as possible. There's a fresh perspective to an existing problem for you! *Robert Thomson*

- **Scottish Independence.** Scottish Independence referendum to be held as soon as possible. Because we have waited long enough. *Janette McMinn*
- **Scotland needs to regain its independence.** How to regain independence in the quickest way possible so that our country can mitigate the effects of Brexit, the plague and climate change. We're going to die if we don't do this. *Eileen Brown*
- **Scottish Government has sole discretion over subjects for consultative referendums.** UK Gov has asserted that the Scottish Government has no right to consult with the Scottish people via a referendum without consent from Westminster. The Claim of Right, re-confirmed unanimously in debate at Westminster in 2018, asserts that it is for Scotland to make these choices. Support for holding a referendum on Scottish Independence in the very near future is at over 60%, and for Independence itself at 54%, and the Westminster Government has asserted that it will not permit Scotland a choice in the current UK Parliamentary term, thus contravening the will of the Scottish people, decisions of its parliament in Holyrood, and the Claim



of Right. The matter is urgent as Scotland needs the full powers of an independent nation to drive the recovery from Covid19 and survive Brexit after-effects without the dead hand of the UK parliament preventing action. *Mike Ramsay*

- **Is the 1707 Treaty of Union a voluntary union?** I want it confirmed beyond doubt that the union of 1707 was a voluntary union between Scotland and England and that either party may leave the union without needing permission from the other party. Because the ancient country of Scotland is in clear and imminent danger of being erased by WM. *Bill Laing*
- **Referendum over independence for Scotland.** There now exists, according to a number of opinion polls, a sustained majority who wish a democratic voice on the issue of independence for Scotland. I respectfully ask that the Scottish Affairs Committee commit to reviewing the current situation and provide a solution for Scotland. Opinion polls have now consistently shown that the Scottish electorate want a democratic opportunity to express their wish to become independent from Westminster. *Yvonne Johnston*
- **Denial of democracy.** Scottish electorate have elected parties with a clear mandate to hold an independence referendum. The so called mother of parliaments is denying that right. Do we reside in UK in a dictatorship, or are we actually a democratic country. The UK claims to be a democracy and rightly is attacking China for imposing on Hong Kong. It's double standards, there is a complete lack of democratic accountability when a dictatorial WM denies Holyrood the right to hold a plebiscite. *Roland Smith*
- **Independence for Scotland.** Scotland to have another referendum for independence. All the promises the U.K. Government made to Scotland in 2014 after Scotland's last independence referendum were broken. We were asked to vote No to independence as we were told that was the only way to stay in EU. That was a lie. Scotland voted to stay in the EU with 62% in favour. We are being dragged out against our will. Scotland didn't vote for a Tory Government but that's what we've got. Now looks like the U.K. have no intention of agreeing a deal with the EU and are heading for a no deal Brexit which would mean disaster for Scotland. Covid 19 is running riot in England and Scotland



have no power to close our border to prevent infection into Scotland.

Alison Mckenzie

- **Should countries of UK be able to decide their future.** Should the four members of the UK Union be able to decide their own futures, Scotland is currently being refused that choice. Who would England ask if they wanted independence from rest of the UK. Does removing EU rights from Scottish citizens against their will and without their permission constitute a breaking of the Act of Union? With 62% voting in favour of EU membership, polls showing a majority in favour of independence, and polls even more in favour of Scotland having a say on its future, surely powers to hold a referendum on Scotland's future should be with those elected to represent Scotland. We already have a "gold standard" agreement in the Edinburgh Agreement that could be reused. The future needs to be decided to smooth any possible transition activity, as delay would likely mean Scotland diverging away from EU standards, especially given powers over key area are likely to be held at Westminster, and not Holyrood. *John Lindsay*
- **Independence for Scotland.** Allow the Scottish people to decide if they wish to be an independent nation. The UK union is undemocratic and in direct contravention of Scotland's wishes. *Jennifer Griffiths*
- **All revenues collected in Scotland then forwarded.** All revenues collected in Scotland then forwarded. The helplessness of asking for own revenue. The control by financial power. In a pandemic we were helpless to direct funds or deviate policy as we are dependent on WM forwarding means. This is unacceptable. *Janet Graham*

Devolution

- **The Committee should look at what powers should next be devolved to the Scottish Parliament.** The committee should look at what powers should next be devolved to the Scottish Parliament i.e. employment, fiscal powers (borrowing for example) immigration, furthermore welfare powers for Social Security Scotland, procurement, energy, broadcasting. I strongly feel that this is in step with public opinion; with the latest support for Scottish independence at 54% there is clearly sustained support from the Scottish people for more autonomy for the Scottish Parliament & Scottish Government as the Scottish public are calling for more of say over Scotland's own affairs. Because during such challenging times the Scottish Parliament and

Scottish Government cannot just sit by and hope for the best while so much power is centralised to London. As we are currently a mere couple of months away from exiting the EU without any deal in addition to trying to overcome the current pandemic, it is clear for all to see that Scotland does not possess anywhere near the correct amount of powers in order to properly run Scotland and save people's livelihoods while also saving the Scottish economy during such an economically tough time. The SNP are currently in their 13th year of power at Holyrood and by far have the most Scottish MPs at Westminster which has been a recurring theme for many years now. This clearly shows a consistent electoral appetite from the Scottish electorate for more government decisions to be made by a government that the Scottish people have elected to sit in our parliament in Edinburgh, instead of being dictated to, undermined and blatantly ignored by successive Conservative governments of which only a small minority of Scots have voted for over the past 5 decades. *Lewis McCathie*

Local government review

- **Scotland has very few local authorities in comparison with similar countries such as Norway.** Consider the impact more authorities with corresponding increased local accountability would have to the delivery of services and the ownership residents would have for how they are governed. In aberdeenshire for example Peterhead academy has been failing for years. The majority of councillors have no interest, no skin in the game, as their academies are succeeding. Glibly promoting that aberdeenshire results are above the Scottish average ignores the failings of the minority of schools. A smaller authority could not ignore these failings. A smaller authority would provide a democratic improvement in governance. *Stuart Benzie*

Scottish Affairs Committee membership

- **Scottish Affairs Committee versus EVEL.** The treaty of union in my opinion has been broken by UK Government introducing English votes for English laws I think the Committee should understand that a Scottish Affairs Committee should only have Scottish MPs and no interference from English MPs as EVEL does for Scottish MPs I would like this Committee to bring to the attention of the UK's Government that when the treaty of union between the kingdom of Scotland and kingdom of England the parliament of Britain would have equal rights

for MPs from both nations this has been broken by EVEL and if this is not withdrawn then I believe an international court might be in a position to look into Scotland's voice being overlooked in a Westminster Parliament. I, like more than the majority of my country of Scotland did not give permission for Westminster to scoff and ignore our MPs or have them silenced when it comes to EVEL I am sure the English MPs on the committee would not like to be silenced in the chamber of Westminster therefore may I suggest to even all things out that England gets its own Parliament and leave Westminster to a 4 nation Parliament. *Isabella Duffy*

Inclusivity

- **Considering the impact the lack of Inclusive Communication Strategy has on the Community/Economy.**

The lack of Inclusive Communication strategy and planning has a huge impact on relationship with citizens and subsequently on the economy in Scotland. For example over one million Scots are affected by deafness alone and this will worsen as the proportion of the aging population increases. The combined impact of communication and language barriers makes access to information and participation of a multicultural nation critical tasks and we believe strategic investment in communication accessibility and participation would not only reduce social isolation and reduce inequalities but actions would boost cohesion and the economy too. There is significant information on disability, lack of access and need to evidence the argument.

Communication is essential to both communities and business. It is a core employ-ability skill yet we leave school with language rather than communication qualifications. Communication accessibility does not carry the same weighting as mobility. This leaves us weak for example, planning and managing age related hearing loss and many other communication conditions. Communication accessibility is generally implied in plans rather than explicit. Significant, systematic consideration and shifts in investment would produce more cohesion, new areas for learning, investment and public/economic benefit.

Deafscotland

- **Please ban conversion therapy.** Conversion therapy is not illegal at the U.K. or Scottish government level, it would be great for Scotland to lead on this as it often does and ban it entirely. It is the attempt to

convert someone's sexuality and has been slammed by all major health organisations, leading to suicide and other mental health problems. It is a basic human right in this country to love who you want to love, that includes the right to not have others attempt to force you to change your sexuality (which is impossible). *Dylan Patterson*

Defence

- **Future of MoD bases in Scotland post independence.** The Committee explored the issue of how an independent Scotland might organise its armed forces back in 2013 and I attended as a witness in two of those sessions. Time did not permit some of the important sub topics of the general debate to be explored in any detail. Of importance here is the future of MoD bases in Scotland should the country become independent, with particular reference to HMNB Clyde at Faslane/Coulport and RAF Lossiemouth in Moray. Time has moved on since the 2013 Committee inquiry and support for Scottish independence seems to be at an all time high. It is pretty clear to me that an independent Scotland would not, initially at least, be able to sustain a full spectrum military capability for defence purposes even if it wanted to do so. Accordingly, it seems that some flexibility will be required to cover capability gaps which might mean continuing use of bases in Scotland by rUK/NATO forces for some time post independence. This is likely to be contentious, particularly with reference to Faslane. I believe the options here are worthy of a Committee inquiry. *Stuart Crawford*

State Pension Age for women

- **Fairly review and compensate the plight of women born in 1950s.** In Scotland life expectancy is consistently lower than that reported by UK Government. This must be considered as part of tightening the maladministration which has detrimentally affected the health, well-being, and financial status of many women who have worked for 50 years and contributed to UK Treasury & NI Fund. Well documented areas of contention which DWP and successive Governments have ignored; women born in 1950s have been cheated and devalued, to the point where Human Rights don't appear to be relevant in terms of Statutory Pension entitlement and/or as having the right to be advised of life changes that have affected them because Former Chancellor deemed to accelerate age for women 'was easiest and most financially

beneficial' to offset UK effects of global downturn and austerity measures being implemented. *Joan Fraser*

- **If they change women's retirement age to 60 this would allow younger people to get jobs.** Change women retirement age to 60. *Lesley Buchanan*
- **Let older workers retire to free up jobs for younger unemployed.** Pensions reform needs attention and discussion. Especially now when many younger people will be out of a job. Let the older workforce retire on a decent pension to free up jobs. It's a no brainer. I retired in February this year and struggled to keep going til I got my pittance of a pension at 66. Born 1954 and female. It's a disgrace keeping people in work in the hope that they'll die before the govt has to pay out the money that these workers have invested all their working lives. Blatant robbery by the govt!! Get it sorted 😡 Because 1950s women have been robbed blind by the UK govt. *Maria Wilson*
- **Reversal of State Pension Age changes to boost post Covid recovery.** State Pensions remain a reserved issue to the UK Government. Changes were introduced to State Pension Age in 1995 and 2011 based on average longevity predictions which are now outdated and regionally inaccurate. In addition this disadvantaged millions of women born in the 1950s who during their working lives had no opportunity to amass a full state pension nor were they fully informed of changes to allow them to make provision. This cohort were also denied access to many occupational pensions. Many are now forced into costly working age benefits. In the new normal Post Covid, a review of State Pensions is essential. Not only are the funds denied those who had expected their State Pensions at 60 causing personal hardships, it has many knock on effects to Physical and mental well-being. It contracts local and national economies not only in terms of spending powers but losing the ability of this cohort to provide family support in care for the young and elderly and in voluntary roles, but inhibits the succession planning and employment of younger workers. It exacerbates age related health conditions leading to future socio economic consequences also. *Rosemary Dickson*
- **Working over 60 we should be getting our pension as no work available.** Work for over 60 nothing available. No jobs for over 60, Health in over sixty has deteriorated due to corona virus, jobs are

needed for younger generation as over 60 jobs can be very debilitating at this age. I am 61 left my job as very heavy manual work loafs. Went for NHS 24 job and was dismissed after 3 weeks training as training very fast and intense, I would have needed extra training and was told they did not have time to train me as I could not keep up with the young ones. I have now been left unemployed with no sign of any jobs available. I have worked since I was 15 and never been unemployed , not even sure about claiming unemployment benefit. *Anne Heaney*

- **Reform State Pension Age.** Took early retirement from Civil Service in 2012 expecting to receive my State Pension on my 60th birthday in Aug 2015. I received letter from DWP in Nov 2012 advising I would receive my State Pension on my 66th birthday in Aug 2021 which meant a 6 year delay. With young people now finding it more difficult to find employment due to Covid-19, if the Gov reformed the State Pension Age policy to allow 1950s born women to receive their pensions now it would free up jobs for young people. Raising State Pension age for 1950s women without advising individuals involved was a grave injustice and is due to maladministration by the DWP. *Roberta Lynch*
- **Pay Women their rightful pension.** I would like the committee to look into the unfair treatment of women who did not receive their pension when it was due to them. The government did not give sufficient notice to make adjustment to future financial plans for retirement. I fully accept and encourage equality, however I did not receive my pension at the age of 60 years and was not given enough notification to make adjustment to my retirement plans. This treatment by the government has been unfair to many women who have been unable to make up the shortfall to their pensions. I personally was made redundant after becoming ill with Rheumatoid Arthritis and would certainly have made different plans for my future had this information been made available to me. *Mary Ann Montague*
- **Pay the State pension NOW to women born in 1950's.** In light of the current COVID 19 pandemic, and so many facing long term unemployment, it would make sense to pay the State Pension to 1950's born women, now. Many, like myself will face the possibility of having to claim unemployment benefits until the age of 66, with no hope of finding alternative jobs in the current climate. Not only would this make sense financially for the government, it has the potential to

free up jobs held by these women which could be offered to younger people. This would be the perfect time for the chancellor to consider the plight of these women, given that the government seems to be handing out millions, if not billions, to other schemes at present.

There are also major concerns for this groups health, given that WHO have advised that over 60's are a vulnerable group to COVID 19. A fact that this government have deemed to ignore! 1950's women have been robbed of their pension at 60 by this government. Many are suffering severe hardship after a lifetime of employment, paying their dues as required by the government. It is a fact that the swift increase in SPA was not communicated to everyone in a timely manner, with many discovering the increase by chance, shortly before their 60th birthday. I have worked since I was 16 and by the time I receive my state pension I will have worked for 50 years! *May Rookes*

- **State pension age review.** Re-examining the age for state pension. Women born in 1950 were not given enough notice and in some cases no notice about the change in pension age. These women are unfairly disadvantaged. Their jobs could be given to the younger members of society. This would help with the unemployment figures. *Jacqueline McConville*
- **Scotland loses out again.** Scotland loses out as we have a lower life expectancy and need a review UK wide post Covid. Also the jobs that would become available if over 60's women could finally retire would benefit the young unemployed. 1950's women worked throughout their lives being paid less than men in the understanding that they could retire at 60, the moving of the retirement age without notice amounts to a fraudulent act by the government and has caused untold suffering to those women. *Geraldine Orouke*
- **Due to shorter live expectancy in Scotland please pay pension now born 1956.** pension and retirement age. Would help my age group also give employment to younger people. *Margaret Strachan*
- **State Pension Age Reform needs to be reconsidered given the adverse affect on 1950s women.** As life expectancy is lower in Scotland, the pension reform affects women more and this should be investigated and reconsidered. Many 1950s women are affected disproportionately by the pension reforms, many having their pensions



delayed by 6 years with little or no notice. It is discrimination of the highest order and so unjust. *Lynda Gallagher*

- **Allow Scottish Government to compensate 1950's women who have been conned out of their pension for six years by the Westminster Government.** No notice, no benefits, no care for 1950's women. This would free up jobs for younger people and provide free childcare to allow parents to get back to work. *Isobel Fleming*
- **People in Scotland have a lower life expectancy than other atead.** Pension compensation for 60s wen. Because too many women over 60 are being forced to work longer although many are not fit to work, 60s women will have worked 51 years of their lives and will probably be lucky to have 1 - 5 years retirement, probably not in the best of health to enjoy it. Government says they look after people in retirement so let them prove it. *Lila Mulgrew*
- **Lower life expectancy in Scotland therefore review of age to qualify for state pension.** Life expectancy differences in locals of UK. Lower life expectancy Scotland. *Patricia Scully*
- **Review of pension policies.** Pensions owing to 1950s born women needs to be reviewed and additional provision made. Women are being left penniless and, on occasion, suicidal due to lack of forewarning re extension of pension age. *Madeline Butler*
- **To pay a bridging allowance to women born in 1950's who have been affected by pension age increase.** Unfair treatment of women born in the 1950's in relation to state retirement pension. Most women have paid 40years plus National Insurance Contributions only to discover retirement pension will not be paid until 65, 66, 67 etc. Not advised timeously or at all. Women are in dire financial straits. Scotland has a lower life expectancy than other places in UK and many women are dying before reaching this increased pension age. Need review UK wide post Covid. *Anna White*
- **Reinstate the state pension age to 60.** Women born in the 1950s have had their state pension delayed, with insufficient notice, in my case until I am 66, despite having paid my National insurance since the age of 17. I will have lost almost £40,000. Please look into the possibility of returning our state pension age to 60 and paying the amount due to me and other women in my position. Because the delay



has caused considerable financial hardship to a group of women who have always paid their dues, and having been given, in many cases, no notice of the change, they have been unable to make appropriate alternative financial arrangements. *Deirdre Parkinson*

- **I am a 1950's born woman and have never been advised of the change in my State Pension from 60 to 66.** This has had a massive impact on my life as I was an Early Years coordinator and retired at 57 due to rheumatoid arthritis being on my knees and kneeling with children from birth to 3. I expected my pension at 60 but now at 62 I cannot find work. Because the Westminster Government has treated us unfairly and unequally due to the life expectancy in Scotland being lower than rest of UK this has had a detrimental effect on my life !
Linda Brown
- **Pay our state pension fee up jobs for younger folk.** None of us are against an safe rise in the State Pension but 6 years in one go is so unfair a phased increase would be much more agreeable. Because we were led to believe all our working life that we would retire at 60 Then the goalposts were shifted and we were shafted our only "Crime " was being born in the 50's. *Catherine Nurse*
- **The state pension age for women should be lowered.** Women who live in Scotland have a lower life expectancy. The state pension age should be lowered to reflect that. Because women are disproportionately affected and therefore this is discriminatory. *Mhairi McGowan*
- **Pay State pension.** Free up work for the young. Important !! Everyone please fill and send this form in. Ask for State Pension Age reform and point out Scotland loses out as we have a lower life expectancy and need a review UK wide post Covid. I am 65 this year, I was I'll health retired from my job as a care worker which I loved back in 2018 as I could no longer do the job due to my health deteriorating. Now I don't know how you expect anyone to live on fresh air It's a disgrace that many people don't live long enough to get their due pension! *Mrs Maria G Hamilton*
- **State Pension age reform.** Lower the state pension age to 63. The unfair way the Retirement age has risen to 66 for women born in the 50's without notice. Scottish women lose out as we have a lower life expectancy than that of England. *Caroline McConnell*



- **Pay 1950s women's SP to boost economy and free jobs.** The Committee should look at the inequality caused by the raising of the State Pension Age for women born in the 1950s. This cohort of women suffered discrimination throughout their working lives and as a result of this and the Gender Pension Gap have been financially disadvantaged. This cohort of women were not given appropriate notice of the rise in the SP age and so were unable to save or adjust workplace pensions. It is now widely accepted that this treatment of 1950s women has been unfair and has been mismanaged by successive governments. In his recent report on poverty in the U.K., UN Special Rapporteur, Philip Alston highlighted the plight of many 1950s born women and called on the government to find a fair solution. *Elaine Watts*
- **Theft of my pension.** I would like the committee to look at my pension issue . I am 63 and expected my pension (not a benefit) . at 60 . I paid in since the age of 15 years of age and did not get any notice of this change until a year before retirement . I believe the uk government stole my pension in the disguise of equality , women were never equal to men throughout my working years and everyone knows this . They picked on an easy target to steal from . I am struggling in a job I know I am not fit for anymore , as I have osteoporosis . I along with many women of my age are being forced to work in jobs we are not fit for , It feels like the uk government want us all to die before this unfair raise of age to our pensions . . Surely the right thing to do especially under the circumstances we all find ourselves in to give us our pensions now and let the younger generation have jobs , if Germany can do it why can't the uk ? Please consider this and help us in our plight .
Because women of my age paid in to our pensions since 15 years of age , and we deserve our pensions now. Yours sincerely *Carol Stewart*
- **Please lower the pension age for women in Scotland.** As Scotland has lower life expectancy I feel the state pension age for women should be lowered to 60 and backdated. Covid 19 has been detrimental to so many people who have regrettably not survived to receive any state pension. I survive on £112 month from a small pension I had and having to wait until I'm 66 for state pension sadly might not happen. Too many women have paid in for 40 years or more and the Government has stolen our money. Not enough warning that this was to happen and didn't allow women to prepare for another 6 years. Absolutely disgusting. *Irene Krebs*



- **Pay pensions at 60 free up jobs for young people.** Pensioners at 60 struggling with health issues and are not motivated to carry on until they drop or collect a pension at 66, Discrimination against women, who have worked 50 years and lost what they paid in. Equality with men we never had opportunities to take up pensions and are not given pension credit like men. *Pamela Joan Fraser*
- **I would like the Committee to look into the recent State Pension Age Reforms and how that adversely affects women in Scotland in particular as we have a lower life expectancy than women in the rest of UK.** State Pension Age has been an invidious piece of legislation which has the effect of impoverishing women who have mainly worked all their lives expecting their state pension at age 60 only to have that stolen from them without warning. *Margaret McCulloch*
- **State pension Back to age 60 for 50's born women.** State pension age should be returned to age 60. Women born in the 1950's have been subject to a change without appropriate information and notification. Many women in this group are suffering severe hardship and even dying because of the impact of the rise in pension age. This deserves attention because the women in this group have paid into their pensions over 40 years and the majority received no formal notification of the change in the increased pension age, and were therefore unprepared for it. If the 50's born women could retire at age 60 this could potentially create opportunities for employment for younger healthier people and probably less working days lost to sickness, and parents of children could return to work with support of grand-parents assisting with childcare and reduce the cost of childcare for families. There are many benefits to be gained for all age groups if the retirement age for women born in the 1950's was age 60. *Catherine Farrell*
- **The unfair pension age changes thrust upon 1950s born ladies.** In Scotland our life expectancy is much lower than our cousins in the south of Country is one reason I am feeling scared for what future I may have left I am 63 .The State Pension age changes that were brought forward without enough notice for a massive amount of us to do anything about ,ruining what plans we had for our Retirement at age 60, mine was to clear Mortgage taken at aged 53 because of Divorce instead I have it round my neck till 67 years of age which is

worrying me sick I still work full time paying Tax and National Insurance and very very tired, not able to see more of my grand children And give them treats that I should be able to do but cannot afford to .I have also been working right through this Pandemic .I can only hope and pray the Court Case for our cause gives me some hope .Not one single word in the Media highlighting our situation either . Simply because it has had no real attention given to it . The people who are around my age and have been on benefits perhaps for a long time are still getting those benefits till retirement .i would imagine that is an awful lot of money going out to these people whereas they would only be getting pension and benefits either stopped or at least reviewed. I on the other hand need to still work I have done so since 15, and full time till 24 when I had my first child, no pension available then I worked part time till age 40 also no pension available. Only when I went full time at 40 did I start a pension not enough time to save into something I can live on. I cashed it in at 55 because I had worked out how I was going to use my State Pension at 60 when I reached my retirement age. *Catherine Vonlin*

- **Create jobs for young by letting 50s women retire.** Leaving school we were promised our pension at 60. With little notice this was changed and it has affected thousands of women unable to retire. This has devastating results to health and wellbeing. It is affecting people's lives and health. By giving the promised pension to women it will create jobs for the young. *Rosemary Corro*
- **Pension review.** Many Scottish women born in the 1950's have been denied the pension they were expecting on reaching 60. A large percentage got no notification, farless more than 10 years. CV19 has highlighted injustice even more. The Waspi women were told they were in group at serious risk due to age and shouldn't be working. Yet many were forced to continue working and some paid with their lives. Given the high unemployment that is going to happen surely it would be cost effective to allow Waspi women to retire and free up jobs. Waspi women want the right to retire and must be financially recompensed to do so. This is a blatant injustice and could be rectified by the Scottish government. While it would only help Scottish Waspi women there is no doubt if would put pressure on Westminster to follow. The Scottish government does have the power to address the issue even though



pensions not devolved. The Scottish govt did intervene re bedroom tax without direct power over this system. *Carol Lennie*

- **Pay 1950's Women their State Pension from Age 60 to allow us to leave employment allowing the young to find jobs.** 16-30 years to find/continue with employment for their careers, future etc. I have had ill health retirement and still have to wait until 2024 to receive State Pension even though I have worked all my life. Life expectancy for over 60's. Allow young to move forward with their future plans as Unemployment is getting worse. *Mrs Elizabeth Cairney*
- **State Pension Age reform:review UK wide post Covid.** As a woman born in the 1950's my State Pension Age was set back without adequate notice by the UK parliament leaving me and 3.8 million women in difficult circumstances. All our working lives we have planned for a mansion at 60. We need urgent State Pension review as Scotland has a lower life expectancy and higher health inequalities and we lose out disproportionately. Post Covid this is urgently needed. Thank you. We need urgent State Pension review as Scotland has a lower life expectancy and higher health inequalities. Post Covid this is urgently needed. Thank you. WASPI women need your help noo! *Elaine Loch*
- **Pay women born in the fifties their pension to open up jobs for the young.** I have worked since the age of fifteen paying NI contributions all of my life. Over 40 years. When I was offered early retirement at age 56 I believed and my employer also told me I was only 4 years away from state retirement age. Had I retired at 60 as expected I would have been entitled to full state pension. I have been getting by with small pieces of self employed work and using my savings that were meant to be for my retirement. Since then the goal posts have changed many times meaning I have to wait an additional 6 years on a very low income and also now will receive a reduced state pension as I paid into a private pension. I was assured at the time it would have no effect on my state pension as long as I paid in 35 years I would get full pension but then government changed this in 2016. I have spent my whole life working and bringing up my family with very few holidays and been abroad only twice in my whole life. My savings would have allowed me to see my brothers during my retirement as they both live abroad. Sadly this will never happen as I will not be able to afford it and probably my health will not allow it by the time I reach that age. My parents and many others in my family have not reached the age of

seventy. My first husband, the father of my children died a few years ago at the age of 64 and my current husband has already had major surgery and does not keep well. The government seem to think people are living longer, I am not seeing evidence of this in my circle of family and friends. By allowing women born in the fifties to retire as they fully expected to at the age of 60 then jobs could be freed up for younger people who are probably much fitter and healthier to do these jobs. Cut down on unemployment and other benefits that are having to be paid out and by cutting the amount of stress we are going through due to this will also have the added benefit of less time spent at doctors and hospitals reducing pressure on nhs. *Sandra Moore*

- **Pensions back to 60.** Womens pensions brought back to 60. We are dying. *Elizabeth Fitzpatrick*
- **Give us pensions Give them jobs.** The inequality of the state pension system in the areas of country where life expectancy is worse. Women have been robbed in the name of equality. Many women are dying long before receiving Pension and those living are missing out on other pensioner benefits and allowances. With a lower life expectancy in Scotland why are we having such an extended state pension age. Reduce pension age and free up jobs for younger workers. Our age group #1950s have mainly worked since age 15. *Anonymous*

Health and the NHS

- **Introduce FeNO testing in Scottish respiratory care plan.** Nice NG80 was introduced in November 2017 as the first test that should be done in asthma diagnosis, this has been mainly ignored due to no funding behind it and the misunderstanding of how easy it is done and the time it takes. With funding this can be introduced and help save lives, cut down hospital admissions, medicines costs. All the figures and QALYs are there for it. This deserves attention as in light of COVID and the danger to respiratory patients we can help keep asthma patients well as can be and also save money and lives in the U.K. For all the work and money to go into NG80 to be ignored and not taken up due to funding when the benefits far outweigh the costs in this instance is a sin. The U.K. government should look to work with Circassia (manufacturing Niox FeNO testing devices) in collaboration to help now get the NICE NG80 guidance in primary care and look at ways to work in which there are many innovative ways including the

evolving role of the community pharmacists who could help in testing and where not fully qualified to go any further work with their local GP surgery to deliver the care and support the patients. *Steven Adair*

- **Hubs for elderly, hubs for drugs & alcohol.** Free up A&E. Have these hubs in city's across the country. Charge for the hubs for alcohol & drugs. Money to be put back into NHS. Drunk tanks seems to work in some states in America. It's not a great experience to go into A&E . Being surrounded with drunks, drug addicts & police. Last time I was there with elderly neighbour left in corridor for hours, police officers telling us , their was no police let out on the street. If their was anything to happen officers from Coatbridge or Hamilton would have to attend. Surely this would be more beneficial for both extremes. Elderly hub with doctors & nurses with relevant skills, drink & drugs hub with the relevant specialists in them. A&E cannot carry on the way it is. Someone has to look at this. Put some common sense into this. *Catherine Mitchell*

Immigration

- **The unfairness of the spouse visa system.** I am Scottish, my fiancé is Filipino. Why can't I get married in my own country of my birth without spending thousands of pounds on visa applications and health surcharges for my fiancé. The systems broken and unfair. Why should me and my fiancé be persecuted because we fell in love and happen to not come from the same country? She will be a far greater asset to the country on a tax basis than I am and as a teacher she will give more to this country than I can offer, yet she is discriminated against because of where she was born. That's wrong. I doubt I am alone in this matter. Scotland should have its own immigration rules and set them fairly. *Benjamin Michael Airlie Gill*
- **Improve our treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.** The fact that housing and looking after asylum seekers is outsourced to private companies. The recent tragedy in Glasgow has highlighted the control that an individual company exerts over people seeking sanctuary. Such control, I think, should be exercised directly by local authorities who are more closely accountable to their electors. The need for business to make profits and needs of asylum/seekers refugees may well conflict. *Moirra Crawford*

- **Like Australian states closing borders during pandemic, same with Scottish Border.** The CV19 crisis is showing how England is likely to have continuing outbreaks. Scotland's transmission & death rates continue to fall to very low levels. If and when England gets a second wave, Scotland should have the right to have border checks at the English border. If Canada and Australia can do between their provinces and states, then there is no reason why Scotland can - as an urgent matter of public health and safety. Just a competent police & medical check on all incoming traffic. Only a pathological unionist would refuse this, at a terrible price. *Conor O'Hata*

Nordic hut culture

- **Develop a Nordic hut culture in Scotland.** As part of any wider land reform proposals to improve local decision making and community participation in renewable energy, a hut culture is needed. Research work has already recently been undertaken and completed by Dr Lesley Riddoch, who could perhaps advise, as part of a diverse team of subject and thematic experts. Huts are used in several Nordic countries as a well-being tonic to destress people in more urban areas and would have additional economic benefits through a wider distribution of investment and spending. This would be a crucial step in restoring links to those areas of Scotland that were historically cleared of people. The start of expanding population conurbations, and growing Scotland's population significantly for the first time, in a very long time. I propose a pilot scheme to develop the first new hut village, where staff from the Scottish National Health Service are allocated huts for use by them and their families, so they can recharge and recuperate after long shifts under extreme pressure. Thank you for your service. The new dwellings attract opportunities for local communities to expand amenities, to grow food and to provide services that keep local people employed: building, joinery, electricians, plumbers, maintenance, etc. All procurement contracts must go to appropriate and relevant local businesses, where at all possible to maximize local benefits. Allocation is for life, sales not possible but can be handed down to family members. Details of further operation and practical explanations can be found in Dr Lesley's research and forthcoming book. The wider, longer-term hut expansion project is strategic and intended to use Scottish land and countryside for more beneficial

purposes than investment portfolios and endless / soulless grouse moors. *Douglas Alexander Bendall*

Welfare

- **Impact of social security policy on Scotland.** We would propose the Committee conducts an inquiry building on the work of the 2017-19 Committee's 'Welfare Policy in Scotland' inquiry which was commenced, but not completed prior to the 2019 General Election. This could resume the work of that inquiry, building on the written evidence which was submitted by stakeholders at that time. In particular, we would suggest the inquiry could focus on the following specific areas:
 - Co-operation between the UK and Scottish Governments to deliver Scotland's devolved social security programme
 - The impact of the rollout of Universal Credit on Scotland
 - The impact and delivery of Universal Credit Scottish Choices

Since the passage of the Scotland Act 2016, social security powers have occupied a 'shared space', with some aspects being devolved and some remaining reserved. This requires co-operation between the UK and Scottish Governments as the Scottish Government develops and commences delivery of social security payments. For instance, delivery of the Best Start Grant and forthcoming Scottish Child Payment is dependent on data being shared with the Scottish Government by the UK Government.

Reserved social security policy, has a considerable impact on people in Scotland. Benefits are consistently the most common issue that people receive advice on from Scotland's CAB network, representing 45% of advice provided in 2018-19. In particular, Universal Credit has become the most common specific area of advice provided, and CAB clients in Scotland have experienced a number of issues caused by aspects of Universal Credit policy and delivery.

In addition, whilst Universal Credit is reserved, four administrative flexibilities have been devolved. This requires collaboration between the Scottish Government and Department for Work and Pensions to deliver. Two of the flexibilities have been in operation since 2017, whilst

two of them have not yet been implemented, despite an expressed intention by the Scottish Government to do so. *Citizens Advice Scotland*

- **End the regressive 2 child cap on tax credits.** The tax credit 2 child cap should be reversed as this is an unnecessarily cruel and regressive policy which does not bring any positive contribution to society, instead it only pushes families in to desperation and poverty, with far too many single mothers becoming desperate in order to provide for their children and have consequently turned to prostitution and other extreme measures so that they can feed their children. This should not be happening in the UK which is the sixth biggest economy in the world; the UK Government can afford to reverse this needless tax credit cap immediately and should do so. There is no need for this to be in place and the UK public deserves better. This welfare cap is ridiculously pointless and is a disgraceful way for the government to treat its own people with contempt; this is a dereliction of duty as the government's prime job as the state is to protect and provide for its citizens, yet the UK Government blatantly fails to do this due to this and many other regressive policies. It is hypocritical for government ministers to champion female rights while keeping this harmful benefits cap in place for no apparent reason. It is no surprise to see UK child poverty currently at 30% with experts predicting child poverty will rise further to 34% by 2024. This really isn't good enough considering this issue can be easily fixed at a modest cost to public finances. By reversing this harsh tax credit cap, it would be a progressive step towards tackling sky-high UK child poverty of which UK Government ministers should be embarrassed and ashamed of, yet they don't seem to care. *Lewis McCathie*

Transport

- **How about fixed links replacing short ferry crossings of less than 1 mile.** There are many islands in Scotland, some of them with very short ie less than 1 mile crossings. Many ferries are elderly /inadequate -would fixed links enhance development? Island sustainability is a frequently raised question. Skye has not ceased to "be an island" since the construction of the Skye bridge but has seen substantial population expansion -unlike most other islands. I believe ease of access to be key. There are many v short ferry crossings of less than 1 mile & fixed



links would help support & enhance these communities. *Jean Mary Knowles*