



Scotland Manifesto



Because equality is better for everyone

womensequality.org.uk



Women's Equality Party Scottish Parliament Elections 2016

We are immensely proud to launch our Scottish Manifesto for the Women's Equality Party. It is quite an achievement to have grown from an idea to a political party with over 45,000 members and supporters, fielding candidates in three elections across the UK, in just one year. This manifesto has been produced by our members in Scotland and is the result of their hard work and passion, and reflects their inspiring belief in Scotland's potential.

Scotland is a country that makes history. We have always punched above our weight. We have made our mark globally. Now we have the opportunity to make Scotland the first gender equal country in the world. Gender equality is equality for everyone. Working together we can achieve a fair and just Scotland, a country in which all women and men are equally and highly valued. Never before has Scotland been so politically engaged, so full of hope and idealism.

Women's Equality Party MSPs will be committed to making gender equality a reality and keeping it at the top of the agenda. From ending violence against women and girls to equal representation, from equal pay and opportunity to equal treatment in the media, from equal parenting and caregiving to equal education, we want more for the women and men of Scotland. This manifesto outlines that vision.

Anne Beetham

Anne Beetham
Candidate for Glasgow

Lee Chalmers

Lee Chalmers
Candidate for Lothian



#WE

Nowhere in the world are women and men fully equal. This represents a shameful waste of potential – for women, for the countries that fail to harness their talents and for the societies living in conflict instead of in mutual respect.

WE are the Women's Equality Party, a new collaborative force in Scottish politics uniting people of all genders, ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, beliefs and experiences in the shared determination to put equality at the top of the political agenda.

Democracy has never been more alive in Scotland and now is the time to tip the balance firmly in favour of equality. WE are determined to see women enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because when women fulfil their potential, everyone benefits. Equality between all genders means better politics, a fairer society, a more vibrant economy and a workforce that draws on the talents of the whole population.

In its first four terms, the Scottish Parliament has made progress on women's equality – but there is still a long way to go.

WE believe that Scotland's Parliament can lead the way, making Scotland the first country in the world to achieve full gender equality. This manifesto sets out the first practical steps that will make equality a reality. Our MSPs will do all they can to bring about these changes – and because WE are a collaborative, non-partisan party, WE will encourage all other parties to adopt our policies and will work together to implement them.

Make your second vote count – vote Women's Equality on 5th May.



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Who WE are

The Women's Equality Party was founded in 2015. In our first year, WE have grown into a robust political force with over 45,000 members and registered supporters.

WE are standing for election for the first time in May.

Our manifesto for Scotland has been shaped by ideas and suggestions from our members and supporters. WE have also consulted with advocacy groups, campaigning organisations and policy-makers to build on existing expertise.

Our policies aim to recognise and address the fact that many women experience additional inequalities due to the intersections of class, poverty, ethnicity, sexuality, immigration status, gender identity and mental health needs. WE stand for equality for ALL women.

WE also recognise that the binary words 'woman' and 'man' do not reflect the gender experience of everyone in our country, and support the right of all to define their sex or gender or to reject gendered divisions as they choose.

What WE stand for

Our MSPs will work with all other Members of the Scottish Parliament to achieve our six core goals:

- ▶ Equal pay and opportunity at work and in our economy.
- ▶ Equal parenting and caregiving so that everyone has the same opportunity in family life.
- ▶ An end to violence against women.
- ▶ Equal representation in politics, business and industry.
- ▶ Equal treatment of women by and in the media.
- ▶ An equal education system that creates the same opportunities for all children.

WE do not take a party line on issues outside our remit: to bring about equality for women. WE don't have a party view on Scotland's independence - we want to see equality between women and men in Scotland in any and all circumstances. Our members and supporters come from different sides of the independence debate and, together with our candidates, are free to hold and express their own views.

Above all, our MSPs are ready to lead the way in making Scotland a gender equal country. WE will work with other parties, with businesses, public authorities, organisations and institutions all across Scotland to make that happen. WE will introduce bills and open inquiries to attain our goals, and WE will not rest until equality for women has been achieved.



Equal pay

WE expect equal pay for equal work. WE will tackle the causes of the pay gap, including the existing imbalances that leave many women, including those who are unpaid caregivers or in low-paid jobs, especially vulnerable to inequality.

Forty-five years after the Equal Pay Act came into force, women still earn less than men for work of equal value. The pay gap can be measured in different ways – by pay for each hour worked, by pay for each worker, by total pay for all women and all men. However you measure it, the story is the same: women earn less per hour, less per job, and less overall.

On average, women in Scotland earn £175 less than men per week. The pay gap goes across all sectors and women are more likely to be in low-paid jobs and part-time jobs, which pay less per hour than their full-time equivalents. Too many women in Scotland still live in poverty, including in-work poverty, and carers, disabled women and black and minority ethnic (BME) women are hit particularly hard.

Women do not experience equal opportunity at work. Workplace discrimination systematically holds women back, including discrimination against older women, pregnant women and women returning to work after having a child.

The stark gender inequalities in unpaid work, lack of quality part-time jobs and the gender pay gap leave too many female carers with only one option – to stay at home.

It's time to enforce the equal pay legislation of the 1970s and build a society where women who want to work can do so and are paid fairly for it.

WE will:

- ▶ Through a new Minister for Women and Equalities – and in collaboration with businesses – create an 'Equal Employer' kitemark for employers who apply best practices, including: transparency in pay structures; job shares; flexible and part-time working; equal opportunities for women to take on leadership roles; support for working carers; equal opportunities for pregnant women and mothers returning to work; support for fathers to take paternity leave; and training on non-bias and stereotypes.

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- ▶ Work with local authorities to offer business rate reliefs to incentivise businesses that close the gender pay gap and adopt the kitemark standards.
 - ▶ Build up a universal system of affordable, quality childcare, available for all children from the end of paid parental leave to the start of primary school. The first 15 hours a week – where the educational benefits are clearest – should be free, with the rest payable at £1 an hour by parents, but with a cap for low-income, working parents who should not pay more than 10 per cent of their income on childcare. The new system will be responsive to the needs of parents who work non-traditional hours and need more flexible childcare.
 - ▶ Ensure that quality and consistency in childcare standards are properly monitored.
 - ▶ Increase the Carer's Allowance to reflect the contribution of carers to Scotland's economy.
 - ▶ Encourage employers to commit to the Living Wage, focusing on sectors that have a high ratio of low-paid female staff, acknowledging that women make up the large majority of low-paid workers.
 - ▶ Strengthen Scottish regulations on the Public Sector Equality Duty so that it effectively serves to eliminate employment discrimination and ensure government contractors are held to the highest standards possible.
 - ▶ Increase the capacity of public authorities to undertake an equal pay audit review, broken down by other protected characteristics, and publish the results, along with an action plan to close the gender pay gap and reduce occupational segregation. Define ways to expand this to all organisations contracting with the government.
 - ▶ Establish a 'Women's Employability and Enterprise Challenge' fund, as suggested by Engender, in collaboration between the Scottish Government and businesses.
 - ▶ Investigate the most appropriate way to introduce split payments under Universal Credit administration so that women don't need to apply for individual payments and can be financially independent.
 - ▶ Design a system of formal accreditation of skills and knowledge acquired as a result of unpaid work, including caregiving, child rearing and domestic work.
 - ▶ Enact a tailored programme of training and work placements that recognise women's talents in the devolved Work Programme. Look into ways to require contractors and programme administrators to establish training on gender bias, before being considered as viable bidders for contracts.
 - ▶ Remove barriers to justice for those who have suffered workplace discrimination by abolishing the high costs of Employment Tribunals.



Equal parenting and caregiving

WE are pressing for equal parenting and caregiving, enabling everyone to share opportunity and responsibility in the workplace and at home.

The joys and responsibilities of parenthood are not shared equally in our society. Women make up the majority of those who take long or short breaks from work to take care of children and disabled and older relatives in need of care. Most women are carers at some stages of their lives. Still, care is neither recognised nor properly valued.

Long work hours and high costs of childcare and after-school activities make it impossible for parents who want or need to work to balance work and family life, so that all mothers, fathers and children can flourish. Women, especially single mothers, are dropping out of work and men are working ever-longer hours, dropping out of family life and being denied the opportunity to care for and enjoy time with their children.

This is not beneficial for women, men, government, business, the economy or society as a whole.

WE will:

- ▶ Develop a system of universal childcare available at the end of parental leave, as outlined in our equal pay section.
- ▶ Expect all care providers to pay their employees at least a living wage.
- ▶ Work with private and public employers to remove barriers that stigmatise and prevent fathers from taking paternity leave, including by increasing awareness of the existing rights to parental allowance.
- ▶ Work with employers, initially in the public sector, to improve their contractual offers to employees, so that all fathers can access more time off with their newborn child. All parental rights should apply equally to same-sex parents.

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- ▶ In the long-term, build a system of truly shared parental leave, aiming at a UK-wide non-transferable paternity leave guaranteeing both parents (including same-sex couples and adoptive parents) six weeks away from work on 90 per cent of pay, with an additional 10 months of leave on statutory pay. This again reduces the pay gap, prevents brain drain from businesses, and enables more children to benefit from time with both their parents.
 - ▶ Monitor and evaluate the recently passed Carers (Scotland) Act to ensure both adult and young carers receive the support they need and have access to information and advice about their rights.
 - ▶ Require all hospitals to adopt existing 'best practice' as a matter of routine, permitting new fathers and same-sex partners to be with their partner and newborn child on labour and post-natal wards, if the mother chooses. However, midwives should also meet the expectant mother alone for parts of each appointment to address issues the mother might not want to speak about in front of her partner, e.g. prior pregnancies and potential domestic abuse.
 - ▶ Require baby-changing facilities to be equally available to all genders in all public buildings, and work with businesses to ensure this is delivered in privately owned premises too.
 - ▶ Ensure that NHS Scotland works with local health boards and local authority partners so that all types of families, including LGBT+, single parents and kinship carers, are able to access a comprehensive range of pre- and post-birth classes.
 - ▶ Require all public jobs to be advertised as suitable for flexible working or job sharing by default, unless there is a specific reason this arrangement would be detrimental to the effectiveness of the position. Encourage private employers to do the same.
 - ▶ Require employability partnerships to support small businesses to implement flexible and remote working.
 - ▶ End the use of the stigmatising term 'economically inactive' in public policy and recognise the true scale of women's unpaid labour in Scotland.



Ending violence against women and girls

WE seek an end to violence against women and girls and recognise physical and sexual violence for what it is: a violation of human rights, and an endemic public health problem.

From street harassment to rape and domestic abuse, rates of male violence against women and girls are on the rise. By diminishing women's freedom to participate in society, violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive barriers to gender equality. No woman is free in a society where there are three reported rapes per day and one in five women suffers domestic abuse. Scotland is also a destination for sex trafficking, which involves some of the most brutal human rights violations of our times.

BME women, disabled women, LGBT+ women, women who are living in poverty, suffering from addiction or whose immigration status is insecure, often face deeper and different forms of violence.

By failing to give our young people the tools and information they need to develop healthy and consensual relationships, we are creating a culture that allows negative attitudes towards women to flourish, including everyday sexism, street harassment and objectification.

To end violence against women, it has to be recognised for what it is: structural violence, overwhelmingly carried out by men. It is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality. WE recognise that men and boys are also affected by violence and abuse and the protective frameworks suggested in this manifesto also apply to them.

WE will:

- ▶ Legislate to abide by the key principles of the Istanbul Convention on action against violence against women and put pressure on the UK Government to ratify the convention with immediate effect. We will put prevention, protection, provision and participation at the heart of all our policies.
- ▶ Design a system of legal support for victims of gender-based violence, starting by establishing independent legal representation for victims of sexual assault and rape and providing free legal aid for victims of domestic abuse.

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- ▶ Collaborate with the Law Society and the Police Scotland College to create a compulsory, CPD-accredited training programme about the nature and consequences of violence against women, aimed at police, prosecutors, jurors and judges. This should include education on the new coercive control offence, unconscious bias and intersectional discrimination.
 - ▶ Provide training for front-line staff in public services to recognise domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women, building on the Equally Safe strategy to address the causes of violence and structural gender inequality.
 - ▶ Prevent further trauma for victims/survivors seeking justice by making the legal system simpler and more humane. Include revision of the corroboration requirement in Scots law.
 - ▶ Reduce the waiting time for Specialist Domestic Abuse Courts and expand their good practice to the courts system in general.
 - ▶ Deliver the strategy on ending female genital mutilation (FGM), establishing a multi-agency monitoring system to get an overview of the rates of FGM in Scotland. We will engage with settled communities and support them to tackle FGM, and provide front-line training for teachers, midwives and doctors.
 - ▶ Provide a sustainable national funding strategy for violence against women services that are locally operated and for and led by women. Both larger and smaller organisations need to be able to build long-term plans for their support work across Scotland. Services need to be available and accessible to women who face multiple disadvantages, including disabled women, deaf women, women with mental health needs, LGBT+ women, refugee women and women with uncertain immigration status.
 - ▶ Ensure that those victimised by domestic violence (most often women and children) are not forced to leave their homes and, when they are, they are treated as a priority group in housing allocation.

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- ▶ Ensure that women are protected and that children's views are upheld in decisions about contact and residency in the context of domestic abuse, building on the Safe and Together model.
 - ▶ Consider the denial of reproductive rights to women to be an act of violence against them. We will review the requirements for abortion and look at the case for a centralised specialist service for later-term abortions.
 - ▶ Ensure local authorities strategically commission and integrate long-term support, health and well-being services for survivors, and work with the public sector and businesses to build support for women experiencing violence to access services and retain or re-enter work.
 - ▶ Demand an end to the abuse of women and girls through the sex industry. We will make the case for legislation that fully decriminalises those who sell sex, establishes and funds support and exit services and moves to criminalise the purchase of sex. While we recognise that this issue divides individuals, organisations and political parties – and that there are other models of legislation that would also be an improvement on the status quo – we believe this is the best way to tackle demand and reduce the exploitation of women and girls through the sex trade.
 - ▶ Review the existing measures against hate crimes, including their efficiency on crimes against BME women, disabled people and LGBT+ people. Consider the possibility of expanding the law to include gender-based crime as a category of hate crime.
 - ▶ Ensure police officers receive adequate training and use the law appropriately to take action against street harassment.



Equal representation

WE are pushing for equal representation in politics, business, industry and throughout working life.

Power is not shared equally in our society, and this hurts everybody. In Scotland, women leaders have reached the highest offices, but there is still a long way to go to ensure that women are represented throughout public life. Women continue to be under-represented in public decision-making, including in the Scottish Parliament. Currently there are no female BME MSPs and there are only four BME women out of more than 1,200 local councillors.

Many Scottish businesses have realised the benefits of having women in senior leadership positions. But progress is not fast enough and we are still failing to draw on the talents of the whole population. Not only is this unfair, it is also a huge waste for the economy and for society as a whole. It has been widely established that drawing on the experiences and expertise of people of all genders – and from diverse groups of women – leads to better decision-making.

WE will:

- ▶ Push the Government to ensure women, including BME women, disabled women and LGBT+ women, are represented in all decision-making and that 50 per cent of ministerial posts are held by women.
- ▶ Continue supporting and working with the 50:50 campaign and work with all political parties to immediately introduce temporary special measures to increase women's representation in the Scottish Parliament.
- ▶ Push other political parties to introduce diverse all-women shortlists for local elections, particularly where representation remains the poorest.
- ▶ Set temporary quotas at 50 per cent for all public boards which are being devolved to Scotland, and encourage businesses to meet the same requirements.

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- ▶ Open an inquiry into the possibility of applying gender equality criteria to procurement tendering, aiming at better representation of women across all industries.
 - ▶ Analyse the devolved aspects of the Transgender Equality Inquiry, undertaken by the Women and Equalities Select Committee at Westminster, and look into ways to consult with and increase the representation of non-binary people.



Equality in the media

WE aim to address the ways in which the portrayal of women in the media impedes progress towards equality.

The way women are represented in the media feeds into a wider culture that reinforces inequality. Women are too often reduced to sex objects and victims, or are completely invisible. This harms us all and has to change to ensure our girls and boys grow up comfortable in themselves. It has to change so women can be heard and to make sure women get an equal chance to shape the way our society thinks.

Equality in the media will support every other policy in this manifesto, whether that is by helping to show that dads can care, that female politicians shouldn't be asked about their shoes, that girls don't need to be stick-thin or that boys don't need to be macho to be men.

Women deserve to be seen and heard on the same terms as men: represented and portrayed as diverse, multifaceted human beings with different opinions and different backgrounds and experiences.

WE will:

- ▶ Hold a Parliamentary Inquiry into media representation of women, making recommendations for changes in legislation and whether to establish an independent Scottish monitoring body to push through changes. The inquiry will include: research and analysis of current content and airtime given to men and women; addressing under-representation, sexual objectification and stereotyping and the different impact on BME women, disabled women and LGBT+ women; and expert evidence on the impact of inequality in the media.
- ▶ Use Scotland's formal role in the renewal of the BBC Charter to push gender equality and women's representation to the forefront of broadcast agendas.

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- ▶ Encourage Creative Scotland to drive understanding across the creative sector on improving women's diverse representation in arts and media. Endorse their current research on women's representation.
 - ▶ Work with sports broadcasters, asking them to pledge to double their coverage of women's sport in the next five years.
 - ▶ Hold a Parliamentary Inquiry into existing laws for ensuring women's safety and freedom of expression online.
 - ▶ Call for social media platforms to have and enforce clear codes of conduct and offer simple ways to report violations and abuse.



Equality in education

WE urge an education system that creates opportunities for all children and an understanding of why this matters.

Girls and women are achieving good outcomes in education and are often outperforming boys and men at school, college and university. However, this doesn't translate into equal opportunities when they leave education. Only one out of every 10 engineering and technology students in colleges and universities are women and most apprenticeships accessed by women are in low-paid sectors.

Gender stereotyping in education leads to gender segregation in the workplace and at home. Our education system needs to challenge the stereotypes that drive occupational segregation in employment. Girls need to know they can be astronauts and train drivers as well as nurses and teachers, and that it doesn't matter whether they want to do it in pink sparkles or blue checks. Boys, too, can be liberated by letting go of the gender norms. Boys can learn to play creatively and sensitively and should be allowed to express emotion without fear of mockery.

Schools also need to be places where both girls and boys learn about healthy, respectful relationships and about sexual consent. It is reckless to continue to ask our children to navigate the complexities of sexting, non-consensual sharing of private, intimate images (revenge pornography) and sexual consent with such limited support.

WE will:

- ▶ Promote the 'whole school approach' on gender equality, which should include staff training; pupils' and parents' involvement; a commitment to diversity and equal opportunities; and building up a positive environment for all genders.
- ▶ Audit early years practice, along with Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate, and update recommendations, so that all children experience education that actively promotes gender equality.

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- ▶ Work to recruit more men into childcare and primary teaching.
 - ▶ Work with campaign groups like Let Toys Be Toys and Let Clothes Be Clothes to challenge unnecessary gender bias from clothes and toy manufacturers and retailers.
 - ▶ Design and fund a plan for schools in Scotland to be recognised for best practice in delivering compulsory age-appropriate, specialist sex and relationships education across all school levels. This would include education on sex and relationships, gender identity, consent, mutual respect, sexual health and sexual orientations.
 - ▶ Require all educational institutions, as well as apprenticeship providers, to have a formal sexual harassment policy in place that includes support for victims, disciplinary procedures, and mechanisms for reporting and investigating sexual harassment.
 - ▶ Encourage universities and colleges to provide workshops for all new students and staff on respect, equality and consent.
 - ▶ Include gender equality measures in school inspections so that schools can be evaluated on their efforts to build an environment providing equal opportunities for all. We will also update the Government's bullying strategy accordingly.
 - ▶ Through Education Scotland, ensure that the transition to the senior phase of education is accompanied by independent, non-biased career guidance.
 - ▶ Work with Skills Development Scotland to prevent apprenticeships that push young people into stereotyped careers.
 - ▶ Build on the Gender Action Plan of the Scottish Funding Council to end the gender segregation in college and university education.
 - ▶ Encourage more girls to take subjects that will lead to careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) industries and end the 'leaky pipeline' that prevents talented women from entering and thriving in STEM industries.



Putting gender at the heart of government

WE will push for women's voices to be at the heart of all government decisions and public budgets, to ensure that they don't disadvantage women. WE will work to ensure gender balanced leadership from the highest levels of the Scottish Government to our local councils and communities.

Government policies may come across as gender neutral but a closer look shows just how different their impact can be on women and men. From healthcare to sports, childcare to infrastructure, social security to taxation, decisions can either shape a more equal society or reinforce existing inequalities. A budget that invests in large construction projects but overlooks the value of childcare and shared parental leave means women are more likely to leave work to care for children.

Austerity measures that take most government savings from women's pockets – and refer to traditional men's jobs as investment but to women's jobs as expenses – increase the gender inequalities and put women's financial independence at risk. Similarly, in times of prosperity, when women are pushed from the decision-making table for being 'too risk avoidant', the economy loses out and the inequalities are allowed to grow.

It is time for a change and the Scottish Government needs to lead by example.

WE will put gender equality at the heart of all policy making and all decisions. WE will not allow the Scottish budget to increase inequalities between men and women and WE will never accept sacrificing the rights and well-being of the most vulnerable women in our society.

WE will:

- ▶ Create a new post of Cabinet Minister for Women and Equalities with immediate effect, in order to put gender equality at the centre of decision-making.

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- ▶ Introduce Gender Budgeting to take account of how the Scottish Budget impacts men and women, building on the Equality Budget Statement. This approach should be applied to all public expenditure and will also take account of the effect of multiple forms of discrimination that women face. WE will ensure that the public sector is trained in this approach at all levels of decision-making.
 - ▶ Publish a Gender Equality Bill written in consultation with leading women's organisations. The bill will include targets for a wide range of policy areas; links to the National Performance Framework; and statutory obligations designed to enhance women's equality.
 - ▶ Perform a gendered analysis of the powers devolved to Scotland, to ensure that the social security system works for women and does not further marginalise women with multiple disadvantages, taking into account that because of gender inequality women rely twice as much on social security as compared to men.
 - ▶ Introduce a more ambitious Equality Impact Assessment and a revised approach to gender mainstreaming across Government departments.