SCOTLAND DEMANDS BETTER

A VISION FOR SCOTLAND



On the 25th October of 2025, 5,000 people from across Scotland came together in Edinburgh.

We stood shoulder to shoulder to demand that politicians step up and make the changes we need. Changes that can build a society where every household can thrive and prosper.

Scotland Demands Better was the biggest anti-poverty demonstration in Scotland in a generation.

The campaign united trade unions, faith groups, charities, community groups, and concerned individuals. Together, we marched for hope, positive change, and a better nation for all of us.


Kids
DEMAND
BETTER


SCOTLAND
DEMANDS
BETTER
THE MARCH FOR
ALL OF US
LIVING
RENT


WHERE IS DOCTOR

Change for the better happens when people stand together and demand it.

Scotland needs that change. Too many of us are cut off from life's essentials. Too many are frightened of what the future will bring. Too many of us are feeling tired, angry, isolated, and disillusioned.

But from Shetland to Selkirk, and from Argyll to Angus, we all want similar things. A warm, safe place to call home. A decent income that at least covers the essentials. Healthcare when we need it. Good schools for our children. Buses and trains that get us where we need to go. And support and care for those of us who are elderly, ill or disabled, so they can live with dignity and respect.



We have had success in Scotland when it comes to tackling poverty. But we need to go much further to build a society where everyone has enough to live a decent, dignified life. Our politicians and decision makers need to do things differently – and so does the anti-poverty movement.

This is why we came together to do something we had not done for a long time – to stand up, to shout louder and to demand better.

No more missed targets.

No more broken promises.

No more excuses or passing blame.

The need is too great and the time is too urgent for more of the same.

This shared purpose drove the Scotland Demands Better campaign. It grew through 8 community events across the country, backed by 300 organisations and 8 committed funders. A steering group of 21 people developed 14 detailed policy asks, all built around 3 clear demands for change.


SCOT GOV: USE YOUR POWERS!
MAKE THE RICH PAY
SCOTLAND DEMANDS BETTER
THE MARCH FOR ALL OF US




CARERS DEMAND BETTER
#ScotlandDemandsBetter
65%
of unpaid carers are struggling to afford electricity and gas.
28%
of unpaid carers live in poverty.
carers SCOTLAND

THINGS CAN CHANGE.



Scotland Demands Better is a platform to come together and demand that politicians make the changes we need for a society where every household can thrive and prosper.

Our headline demands, and the policy asks that sit behind them, highlight the practical changes that our political leaders could make to support a better Scotland.

These are actions that can return justice and compassion to our public life and give people a stable foundation to build a better future.

OUR DEMANDS

We demand better jobs for everyone who needs one with fair conditions and wages that pay the bills.

We demand better investment for life's essentials: like affordable homes, good public transport, a thriving natural environment and strong public services.

We demand better social security so that all of us have a foundation for the future.




SCOTLAND
DEMANDS
BETTER


No
Nuclear
No
Nuclear
DIGNITY
BASIC
INCOME
for
ALL

If just a quarter of people earning below the Living Wage saw their pay rise to the real Living Wage, the increase in wages, productivity and spending would deliver £114 million back into the Scottish economy.

If low-income tenants in private rentals had been able to secure social housing, they could have cut their housing costs by approximately £2,200 a year, received £800 less in benefits, and ended up £1,400 better off.

The Highland Council's pilot of municipal bus services is saving the authority around £1.4 million a year.

Investing in social care at Nordic levels could generate 43,000 new social care jobs; 8,000 jobs in industries supplying the care sector, and 24,000 more jobs through spending in the Scottish economy.

Investment in the care sector could create 2.7 times as many jobs as the same investment in construction and produce 30% less greenhouse gas emissions.

An increase in the Scottish Child Payment to £55 would lift 20,000 children out of poverty and deep poverty, and 30,000 children out of very deep poverty.






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BE

HOPE.
SOLIDARITY.
ACTION.



THE MARCH


SCOTLAND
POVERTY ALLIANCE



“PEOPLE ARE NOT ASKING FOR A HAND OUT. JUST A HAND UP!”

“For myself, and the 800,000 other unpaid carers in Scotland, every day is a challenge to cover the cost of essentials and keep those I care for safe, nourished, and warm. Many people in paid employment still struggle to make ends meet with the rising costs of food, heating, rent payments or childcare. We all contribute to society and the economy yet are left to feel invisible or a problem that no-one wants to acknowledge or deal with!

“The Scotland Demands Better campaign was an opportunity for the public to reinforce the message of what the people of Scotland need and deserve to give them the chance of a decent quality of life. People are not asking for a handout – just a hand up!”

Linda Craik, Unpaid Carer
End Poverty Edinburgh


SCOTLAND
DEMANDS
BETTER
THE MARCH FOR
ALL OF US
OBAN
DEMANDS
HUMAN RIGHTS
FOR ALL


THE PEOPLE'S STORY

“WE ALL CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIETY & THE ECONOMY



YET ARE LEFT TO FEEL INVISIBLE OR A PROBLEM THAT NO-ONE WANTS TO DEAL WITH!”

Dale Todd, Managing Director
Courtyard Pantry Enterprise SCIO

“When the campaign was launched, I was hopeful but nervous.”

How would it connect with the broader public beyond the usual anti-poverty circles? How would we mobilise? Would people come out? And what if it rained! Despite the enormous challenge facing The Poverty Alliance and its members, for the first time in a long while, I started to feel a bit of hope.

“When I arrived in Edinburgh, I stepped off the bus onto the steps of the Scottish Parliament into bright sunshine and a sea of colour. There was a real buzz of energy and anticipation for what was to come. I had the honour of holding up The Poverty Alliance banner at the front of the march.

“Once I reached the Meadows, I found a spot and turned to watch the rest of the crowd arrive - wave after wave of colour, sound, flags, and banners. It was a beautiful sight. I felt joyful.

“On the bus ride home, I felt hopeful. I had seen the best in humanity, and I realised this was the kind of country I wanted to live in. At the end of the day, we all want to be treated with respect, have a roof over our heads, care for our loved ones, and have a little money to enjoy life’s good things. It’s not too much to ask, is it?”

Dale Todd, Managing Director
Courtyard Pantry Enterprise SCIO

“WHEN WOMEN, STUDENTS, FAMILIES, & COMMUNITY GROUPS COME TOGETHER WE RAISE OUR VOICES & CAN BE HEARD.”

“When you first arrive here as a migrant, everything feels overwhelming. Poverty made it harder, it is not just about money, it’s about choices you cannot make and the fear of being left behind. That is why migrant voices matter. No one should feel invisible. That is why the Scotland Demands Better campaign matters so deeply to me. When women, students, families, migrants, and community groups come together, we raise our voices and can be heard.”

Aveen Khalil
Dundee Community Activist


SCOTLAND
DEMANDS
BETTER

KEEPING THE MOMENTUM UP



"Everyone here today can make a promise. A commitment to stand in solidarity with those who face poverty and injustice every day. It is that solidarity and hope that we will continue to build in the months and years ahead. Because we know that it is with unity and solidarity across all our communities that we will turn our demands for a better Scotland into reality."

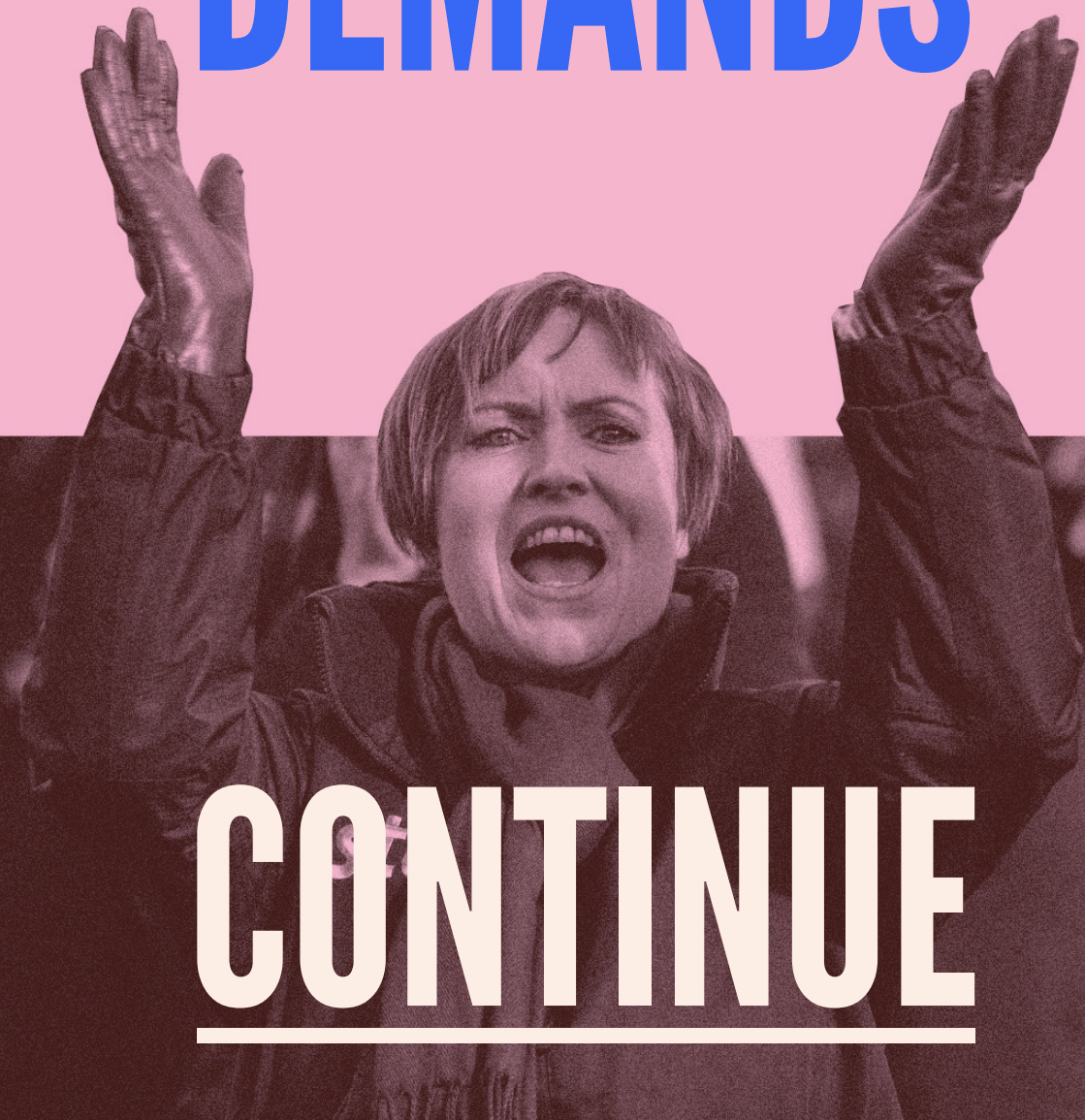
Peter Kelly, Chief Executive
The Poverty Alliance

We know that our vision of a Scotland free from poverty is achievable, but only if we work together. There are many ways we can show solidarity and actively build the better Scotland we all want.

Whether that is getting involved in local projects, writing to your MP or MSP to keep pressure on, or organising within your community or workplace.

With the removal of the two-child limit by the UK Government, we have achieved a big campaign win. That is why, over the coming months and years, we will continue to campaign for our core demands and policy asks.

OUR DEMANDS



CONTINUE

BETTER JOBS



AS FIRST STEPS, WE DEMAND:

THE UK GOVERNMENT

1. Deliver on its promise to end exploitative zero hours contracts and strengthen employment rights.



THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

2. Introduce sectoral bargaining in low-paid sectors, like social care.

3. Do everything in its power to require employers across Scotland step up and commit to living wage, living hours and living pensions.

4. Make student support equivalent to the real living wage available to all Higher Education and Further Education students.


SCOTLAND
DEMANDS
BETTER
THE MARCH FOR
ALL OF US
ALL
ISSUES
are
WOMENS
ISSUES!
EQUAL
PAY
EQUAL
POWER


WOMEN
BEAR THE
BRUNT OF
POVERTY


FOR ALL
INTERSECTIONAL
FEMINISM
WOMEN
WOMEN BEAR THE


No more deaths in custody
No justice no peace
WOMEN AGAINST THE FAR RIGHT
REFUGEES ARE WELCOME HERE
STAND UP TO RACISM
sutrscot
SUTRScotland
SUTRscot
Stand Up To Racism Scotland
standuptoracismglasgow

BETTER ACCESS TO LIFE ESSENTIALS



AS FIRST STEPS, WE DEMAND:

THE UK GOVERNMENT

5.

Create a real social tariff to guarantee lower bills for low-income households and those with unavoidably high energy needs.



THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

6. Provide long-term funding for building new social homes and well-resourced action to protect private renters from unaffordable rents.

7. Expand concessionary travel to under 25s, unpaid carers and people on low-income and disability benefits.

8. End damaging and unfair social care charges and reform the system, increasing investment in social care to protect our human rights and give us choice, control and high-quality support.

9.

Introduce fair and sustainable funding of three years or more for community and voluntary organisations.

10.

Expand and fairly fund energy efficiency and clean home heating schemes, putting the fight against fuel poverty at the centre of their design.




the POVERTY ALLIANCE


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THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION
FOUNDED THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION 1918
SCOTTISH REGION
STUC
equality
women
SCOTLAND DEMANDS MORE SOCIAL HOMES
SCOTLAND DEMANDS BETTER
THE MARCH FOR ALL OF US
FAMILIES DESERVE BETTER

BETTER SOCIAL SECURITY



AS FIRST STEPS, WE DEMAND:

THE UK GOVERNMENT

10. End damaging and unfair cuts and increase disability benefits to reflect the true additional costs of being disabled.



THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

11. Immediately increase the Scottish Child Payment to £40 per week and commit to it reaching at least £55 by 2030.

12. Widen eligibility for and significantly boost the value of the Carers Support Payment for unpaid carers.






WE DESERVE BETTER


DEMAND BETTER


15,000 CHILDREN WITHOUT A HOME
SCOTLAND DEMANDS BETTER
EDINBURGH - 25 OCT 2025
SCOTLAND-DEMANDS-BETTER.COM


POVERTY IS A POLITICAL CHOICE
TATTOOS PIERCING
FREE PALESTINE
SCOTLAND DEMANDS BETTER THE MARCH FOR ALL OF US
FASH
SocialistWorker
TAX THE RICH
No more deaths in custody
No justice no peace
Chan aithnich na craoibh crìoghan
Independent Age
Let's deliver security, not struggle, for older people in Scotland
STAND UP TO RACISM
Migrants make our NHS
Stop the scapegoating
STOP THE FAR RIGHT
No Islamophobia No antisemitism
Stop the far right
Better jobs and respect better social security
Better investment in life's essentials
Girls just want to have FUN
FREE MOVEMENT IS A RIGHT OF
SCOTLAND DEMANDS BETTER THE MARCH FOR ALL OF US

Poverty is a longstanding, structural injustice in Scotland, but it is not inevitable. That is why people across Scotland are demanding better.

We want our political leaders to have the bravery and political will necessary to build a just economy and society through bold action.

The cost of inaction on poverty is high. It is why the solidarity created by Scotland Demands Better is so important. We know that a better future for all of us is possible, so the time for action is now.

Join us to continue the fight for a Scotland free from poverty.