

Policy recommendations for population health: progress and challenges

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Executive summary

In 2016 the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) published a report which identified the most likely underlying causes of the high levels of ‘excess’ mortality observed in Scotland and Glasgow compared with elsewhere in the UK. The report also contained 26 recommendations, aimed primarily at the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council. The recommendations were grouped under three headings: national economic policies; housing and the physical environment; and actions for local government. The aim of this work was to assess the extent to which relevant policy measures have been implemented since publication of the report.

What emerges from the assessment, perhaps predictably given the number and diversity of the recommendations, is a very mixed picture. There have been several highly positive developments, not least in relation to Scottish Government policy around social housing provision, pre-school education, public sector pay, the Child Poverty Act, and more. In contrast, a number of areas were identified where either there has been very little progress (e.g. in relation to the ‘poverty premium’) or where changes have arguably not gone far enough (e.g. income tax rates and bands). A considerable number of initiatives will require time and/or evaluation to determine their impact.

However, since excess mortality is a particular form of health inequality, and as many powers required to address such inequalities are still reserved to the UK government, the work also questions the extent to which the Scottish Government (and indeed local authorities) have the capacity to effectively address such issues. The recent widening of health inequalities as a consequence of UK government ‘austerity’-related policy has, tragically, highlighted this further: at the same time, however, it has also emphasised the need for all forms of government in Scotland – national and local – to take all opportunities available to mitigate the effects of such policies, and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable in society.

It should be noted the work described in this report pre-dates the Scottish Government’s and UK government’s responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although highly relevant, the emergency measures to protect businesses, jobs and incomes are intended to be temporary. The pre-pandemic policies that are the basis of this report are still highly relevant to future policy discussion as the country seeks to emerge from the current crisis, and as governments consider ways in which the economy can be rebuilt.

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Background and aims

In 2016 the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) published a detailed report into the most likely underlying causes of the high levels of ‘excess’ mortality observed in Scotland and Glasgow compared with elsewhere in the UK^{1,2}. This ‘excess’ is defined as higher mortality even after taking into account differences in routinely measured levels of poverty and socioeconomic deprivation. The report, the result of several years’ collaborative research between GCPH, NHS Health Scotland, the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and University College London (UCL), identified, from a systematic assessment of all available evidence, the range of important contributory factors. Although these were multiple and complex, in large part the excess was deemed attributable to a heightened vulnerability among the population, created by a toxic combination of adverse historical living conditions allied to detrimental political decision-making at different levels of government.

As well as identification of the underlying causes, an additional aim of the research was to produce recommendations for policy to address these issues. Twenty-six specific recommendations were listed, aimed primarily at national (Scottish) government and local government (principally Glasgow City Council (GCC))ⁱ. In the period since publication there have been a number of developments in relevant policy areas. Given that excess mortality has been shown to be increasing, it is important to understand the extent to which measures have been put in place which are likely to address this trend. The overall aim of the work presented here, therefore, was to assess progress in relation to these particular policy recommendations.

It is important to emphasise that neither the Scottish Government nor GCC committed themselves to implementing any of the recommendations: clearly, therefore, the aim here is not – and cannot be – to hold them to account in that specific sense. Instead, ‘progress’ has been measured in the more general sense of whether appropriate policies have been introduced which (a) are relevant to the report’s recommendations, and therefore (b) are likely to have a beneficial impact on population health. Furthermore, this assessment of progress is also relevant to other, broader, political and epidemiological issues. Excess mortality is a particular form of health inequality: thus, although the recommendations were developed in response to a set of specific research findings, they also serve as suggested means by which health inequalities generally might be narrowed within Scotland. However, with the fundamental causes of health inequalities being well understood as inequalities in broad socioeconomic conditions³⁻⁶, and with Scotland having only a limited set of devolved economic powers, it raises an important question of the extent to which the country actually has the necessary tools to effectively address these inequalities. The recent further widening of mortality inequalities across the UK⁷⁻⁹, deemed at least in part attributable to UK government ‘austerity’ policies¹⁰⁻¹⁶, emphasises this point further. Similarly, the extent to which local authorities have the capability to meaningfully tackle societal inequalities is a frequent topic of debate^{17,18}. These are important contextual issues within which the assessment process described here sits.

It should be noted the work described in this report pre-dates the Scottish Government’s and UK government’s responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and the associated physical distancing regulations that were introduced in March 2020. Many of these emergency measures to protect businesses, jobs and incomes are clearly relevant to some of the policy areas that are reviewed and discussed here. However, they are also intended to be temporary. The pre-pandemic policies

ⁱ At the time of writing the original report, the authors agreed that addressing the recommendations to government (national and local) *in Scotland*, rather than to UK government, was more likely to be beneficial (in the sense of being more likely to be acted on).

that are the basis of this report are still highly relevant to future policy discussion as the country seeks to emerge from the current crisis.

Methods

Each of the original 26 recommendations were reviewed by the authors. Searches were undertaken of relevant publicly-available policy documents and websites, augmented by individual discussions with key policy informants. Summaries of policy updates were reviewed by other policy experts. Finally, on the evidence of the information collected, an assessment of overall progress was made in discussion between the authors. No specific, appropriate, assessment tool could be identified by which progress could be quantitatively measured: thus, the assessments are necessarily *subjective* in nature.

It should also be emphasised that it was not the intention to provide a summary of *every* potentially relevant national/local government policy that has been proposed, implemented or discussed since publication of the report in 2016. The results tables included within this report – and the accompanying discussion of them below – are intentionally, therefore, a *high-level* summary of *selected, relevant* policy-related issues.

Results

The excess mortality report recommendations were grouped under four, overlapping, thematic headings: national economic policies; housing and the physical environment; specific actions for local government and partner organisations; and ‘understanding deprivation’. Four results tables, corresponding to these thematic headings, are presented at the end of this report. Within each, the original recommendation is listed alongside relevant policy updates, and a resulting overall assessment of progress. The details included within those four tables are summarised briefly below.

It should be noted that although the report’s recommendations were primarily aimed at Scottish and local government, in fact a small number of them related more to policies that are reserved to the UK government. These are not explicitly discussed here.

National economic policies (recommendations 1-10) (Table 1).

As listed in Table 1, ten recommendations aimed at narrowing the socioeconomic drivers of health inequalities were listed. These included: making the reduction of income and wealth inequalities the central objective of Scottish Government (SG) economic policy; narrowing inequalities in ownership of capital (e.g. land, housing, shares); more progressive and fairer taxation (in relation to income, corporate, council, and asset & wealth taxation); ‘fair work’ and wages; diversification of industrial policy; developing a caring and effective social security system in Scotland; addressing the costs of living (including developing an ‘anti-poverty childcare system’, reducing the ‘poverty premium’, creating a ‘living rent’ level for the private rented sector, and reducing the cost of public transport); and adopting ‘poverty proofing’ and ‘health in all policies’ approaches to all SG policy-making. Each of these are explained in more detail in Table 1.

As Table 1 shows, progress in relation to these many different recommendations has been mixed. There have been a number of positive developments. In relation to *addressing the costs of living*, both the expansion of free nursery places (from 600 to 1,140 hours per year for all three and four year-olds, and eligible two year-olds) and the provision of free bus travel for those aged under 19 years are likely to have beneficial impacts. There have also been advances with regard to *fair work and wages* in terms of, for example, Scottish public sector pay policy, which commits to paying a minimum of the real living wage to all employees of devolved public bodies in Scotland, and in terms of increases in the numbers of real living wage accredited employers. Similarly, the new *Scottish social security system* is being established, based on a human rights approach and embedding principles of ‘dignity, fairness and respect’ in its design; in addition, some new benefits have been established and timescales for the introduction of key payments to low-income families have been brought forward. These additional payments are relevant to the 2017 Child Poverty Act which committed the Scottish Government to reducing child poverty to 10% by 2030; in contrast, the UK government abolished child poverty targets in 2016. Although arguably limited in scope and impact, some degree of *more progressive taxation* has been achieved through changes to income tax rates and bands and by means of the new Land & Buildings Transaction tax. Finally, it should be remembered that the Scottish Government’s economic strategy remains unchanged, and ‘tackling inequality’ is still one of its key aims.

There have also been other policy developments which appear positive, but which time – and in some cases, evaluation – will be required to determine whether or not they will have any meaningful impact: for example, the establishment of the (now statutory) Poverty & Inequality Commission, the promised parliamentary discussions on changes to council tax, the Fairer Scotland duty (relevant to the recommendation of *poverty-proofing policies*), and the ongoing process of public health reform, certain features of which are relevant to the recommendation of adopting a *health in all policies* approach to policy-making.

However, there are also areas where there appears to have been no or very little progress, for example *reduction of the ‘poverty premium’*, *diversification of industrial policy*, and the recommended introduction of a so-called *‘living rent’*.

Full details of all of these are provided in Table 1.

Housing and the physical environment (recommendations 11-18) (Table 2).

The excess mortality report highlighted important differences in the current and historical living conditions of people in Scotland and Glasgow compared with elsewhere in the UK. Consequently, several policy recommendations were developed in relation to the quality of housing and other environmental factors. As described in detail in Table 2, these included: building more high quality, affordable social housing; extending the Scottish Housing Quality Standard to the private rented sector; addressing the issue of fuel poverty; maintaining and protecting funds for social housing maintenance and repairs; strengthening the impact of the Place Standard for Scotland; improving neighbourhood maintenance; increasing access to quality greenspace in deprived areas; and improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Table 2 suggests that, as is the case with the first set of recommendations, there has been mixed progress. There have been some notably positive developments. First, there is the expansion of *social house building* in Scotland, with the SG committed to building 50,000 affordable homes by March 2021, 70% of which will be in the social rented sector. Second, the SG has also pledged to

eradicate *fuel poverty* by 2040: this is now embedded in law, and various new energy efficiency measures have already been implemented. Finally, in terms of *road safety*, 20mph speed limits will be introduced across Glasgow (although not nationally) in the coming years; the city has also been investing in safer cycling routes and measures to tackle city centre air pollution.

There have also been some encouraging policy initiatives with regard to both housing quality in the *private rented sector* (with changes made to the Scottish 'Repairing Standard'), and in terms of the recently established Scottish Land Commission leading a task force aimed at restoring vacant and derelict land in Scotland.

However, in terms of the *physical environment*, there appear to have been no clear or systematic improvements in quality of greenspace, while some aspects of neighbourhood quality have become worse (possibly linked to budget cuts associated with UK government austerity measures). Developments in some areas (e.g. *maintenance and repair funding*) are unclear.

Further details of all these recommendations and associated updates are provided in Table 2.

Actions for local government and partner organisations (recommendations 19-25) (Table 3).

Historical adverse policy-making by local government in Glasgow is a key element of the explanation for excess mortality in the city. Thus, a number of recommendations aimed at local government were developed, as presented in Table 3. These included: understanding the impact of local decision-making on population health; related to that, avoiding repeating historical mistakes by maintaining and supporting existing communities; distributing income progressively by means of a fairer system of local taxation; reviewing the boundaries and/or the funding allocation system for local government; as with the SG, adopting 'poverty proofing' and 'health in all policies' approaches to local policy-making; identifying specific actions to narrow inequalities within the city (e.g. increasing wage levels of lower-paid council employees, adoption of 20mph speed limits, use of participatory budgeting); and using City Deal funds to help the most vulnerable.

Progress is generally much less clear for this set of recommendations. As Table 3 shows, however, in some cases this is because the recommendations were quite broad (*understanding the impact of local decision-making on population health; avoiding repeating historical mistakes*), and in others because the powers actually lie outwith local government control (*income distribution based on a fairer system of local taxation; reviewing local government the boundaries/funding*). Although there has been no clear evidence of *City Deal* money being used to assist the most vulnerable in the city, there has, however, been some progress in other areas: the planned implementation of *20mph speed limits*, the fact that all council employees (including those employed by ALEOs ('arms-length' organisations)) are now paid a minimum of *the Real Living Wage*, and successful pilot work around the concept of participatory budgeting.

Understanding deprivation (recommendation number 26) (Table 4).

The excess mortality research demonstrated that there were likely to be aspects of the experience of poverty and deprivation that were different in Glasgow and Scotland compared with elsewhere in the UK, but which are not captured by existing measures^{1,2}. Thus, a specific recommendation was to undertake new research to understand this better. As Table 4 shows, this is now underway, led by the Glasgow Centre for Population Health and Public Health Scotland.

Discussion

Summary of findings and implications

The policy recommendations included within the 2016 excess mortality report were large in number and broad in scope, particularly in terms of the many different policy areas to which they were relevant. The resulting ‘mixed picture’ of progress was, therefore, probably inevitable. This is true of recommendations aimed at both national and local government.

It is to the Scottish Government’s credit that a number of highly positive developments have occurred since the report’s publication, for example in relation to social housing provision, early learning and childcare, public sector pay policy and several other areas. Critics would point to failings in addressing issues such as private sector rent levels and the ‘poverty premium’, and to policies which have not brought about sufficient change (e.g. new income tax rates and bands). An emergent theme from the assessment process described here is one of uncertainty of impact: this is in relation to the many strategies, policy statements, consultations, establishment of committees and so on which signal good intent, but where likely effects are unclear and/or where further time and detailed evaluations will be required. Nonetheless, the fact that the SG remains committed to tackling inequalities – which lie at the heart of the issue of excess mortality in Scotland and Glasgow – is important, and clearly contrasts with current government policy elsewhere in the UK. Another, related example of this is the country’s approach to tackling poverty: the 2017 Child Poverty Act means that Scotland is now the only part of the UK to have statutory targets, measures and dates by which child poverty should be substantially cut.

This contrast with UK government policy-making and approaches is also important. As stated in the Introduction, since publication of the 2016 excess mortality report, health inequalities have widened considerably across all of the UK⁷⁻⁹, including in Scotland and Glasgow¹⁹, driven by increasing death rates among the poorest and most vulnerable, and deemed attributable in large part to UK government policy¹⁰⁻¹⁶. In the 2016 report, the authors stated that, among other requirements, policy needed to “mitigate against the effects of future vulnerabilities linked to current UK government policy”¹. Tragically, these ‘future vulnerabilities’ are now reflected in current mortality statistics and raise an important question regarding the capacity of a devolved administration with limited powers to respond to such a situation, and therefore to achieve its stated aim of tackling inequalities. Two specific examples of policy developments are pertinent to this discussion: ‘fair’ work/wages and social security. In both of these areas, welcome measures have been introduced by the Scottish Government; however, with both employment law and the vast majority of social security powers still reserved to Westminster, what impact can these relatively small changes really have on overall inequalities? In-work poverty levels have increased considerably in recent years, associated with low pay, zero hours contracts, the so-called ‘gig economy’, and more²⁰. And by next year the social security budget in the UK will have been cut by an astonishing £47 billion since the onset of UK government ‘austerity’ policies in 2010²¹.

Similarly, local authorities are limited in their ability to tackle inequalities. Although councils have local power in many areas of great relevance to public health (e.g. housing, air quality, active travel, alcohol licensing)¹⁷, these are not sufficient to tackle the fundamental socioeconomic drivers of health inequalities³⁻⁶ that exist across society. Local authorities have also been further hampered by the well-documented funding cuts in recent years²².

Despite these constraints, it is clear that in the face of high levels of excess mortality, and with the widest health inequalities in Western Europe, all opportunities must be taken by all forms of

government in Scotland to improve the lives of the most vulnerable in society. Even in the face of current difficulties, more can – and should – be done.

Strengths and weaknesses of this work

There are a great many limitations associated with this work. The subjective nature of the assessment process is acknowledged, and – as stated in the Methods – it was not the intention to review every single potentially relevant policy: thus, various policy developments may well have been missed. As neither national nor local government ever pledged to implement the report's recommendations, the use of the word 'progress' throughout is arguably inappropriate. The strength of the work is mainly in providing a summary of recent policy developments in different areas which may hopefully be useful to others. A number of recommendations are relevant to the new public health priorities for Scotland²³, and we hope they can be used to inform some of the work of the new Public Health Scotland national body. The work has already been used to inform ongoing work in response to the impact of UK government austerity measures on health²⁴.

Recommendations tables

Table 1. National economic policies (recommendations 1-10).

The excess mortality report stated: *A key point emphasised throughout the report, and elsewhere, is that economic policies matter for population health. Widening inequalities in health are a consequence of more general widening inequalities across society, most notably measured in terms of income inequalities. Although the most important fiscal policy levers still remain under Westminster control, it is of paramount importance that all opportunities available within Scotland are taken to redistribute income and wealth across Scottish society. These opportunities include those presented by the devolution of new powers listed in the 2016 Scotland Act²⁵. Specific policy recommendations aimed at achieving this are listed. It should be noted that some of these echo recommendations made by other organisations, including some included within a recent NHS Health Scotland Income Briefing²⁶, as well as policies (highlighted below) which are the subject of proposals by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)²⁷.*

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>1. Economic strategy: making the reduction of income and wealth inequalities the central objective of economic policy is important. It is increasingly recognised that more equal distribution of income and wealth leads to wealthier, healthier, more resilient and democratic economies (even among bodies previously advocating a growth-first approach such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)²⁸ and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)²⁹). Aside from all the other societal benefits this would bring, placing the reduction of income inequalities at the heart of policy would help the Scottish Government to achieve its stated aims of achieving ‘inclusive growth’³⁰ and</p>	<p>The Scottish Government’s updated economic strategy (published in 2015, prior to the excess mortality report)³² still applies. It states that ‘tackling inequality’ is one of its two ‘key pillars’ (the other being ‘increased competitiveness’), with the two described as being ‘mutually supportive’. Beneath these ‘pillars’, the strategy has four main priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investment: ‘investing in our people and our infrastructure in a sustainable way’. 2. Innovation: ‘fostering a culture of innovation and research and development’. 3. Inclusive growth: ‘promoting inclusive growth and creating opportunity through a fair and inclusive jobs market and regional cohesion’. 	<p>Some progress. Policy documents indicate that the Scottish Government is committed to narrowing economic inequalities. The extent to which the implemented policies have achieved this, and the extent to which this can be done with existing devolved powers is a more complex debate, and one beyond the remit of this document.</p> <p>The Scottish Government’s economic strategy pre-dates the excess mortality report, and there has been no real change in the Government’s focus since then. The statement ‘tackling inequality’ lies at the heart of the strategy, with ‘inclusive growth’ one of its four principal priorities. However, the notion of ‘increased competitiveness’ and the reduction</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>reducing poverty and inequality³¹.</p>	<p>4. Internationalisation: ‘promoting Scotland on the international stage to boost our trade and investment, influence and networks’.</p> <p>The promotion of ‘inclusive growth’ incorporates four further elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ‘Fair work’: to ‘promote fair work and build a labour market that provides sustainable and well-paid jobs’. 2. A ‘business pledge’: this is to ‘address long-standing barriers in the labour market so that everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential’ⁱⁱ. 3. Promoting equality and tackling inequality: ‘Tackle cross-generational inequality through, for example, improved childcare, boosting attainment and early years interventions that give every child a fair start in life’. 4. Place and regional cohesion: ‘Realise opportunities across Scotland’s cities, towns and rural areas, capitalising upon local knowledge and resources to deliver more equal growth across the country’. 	<p>of inequality being ‘mutually supportive’ is reminiscent of a previous administration’s strategic objective of the country becoming both ‘wealthier and fairer’⁴¹ – something described as arguably contradictory by some commentators at the time^{42,43}.</p> <p>However, it is also noteworthy that the First Minister has since (in 2018) emphasised the importance of moving beyond mere economic (e.g. GDP) measures of a country’s progress and wellbeing (and in doing so, has aligned Scotland with the governments of New Zealand, Iceland and others as part of the network of ‘Wellbeing Economy Governments’ (WEGo))⁴⁴. Other measures such as the 2017 Child Poverty Act also distinguish the Scottish Government’s approach from that of the UK government.</p> <p>It’s unclear what impact the Poverty and Inequality Commission had as a non-statutory body, or what it may have as a new statutory organisation going forward.</p>

ⁱⁱ This is described in the document as being aimed at encouraging and recognising ‘good business practice’ by means of a ‘partnership between the Scottish Government and businesses by supporting businesses in return for a private-sector commitment to a range of business and social policies’. The latter include paying the Real Living Wage, only using zero-hour contracts ‘in appropriate ways’ and progressing gender balance.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>The various City Region Deals (discussed later in this report) and Regional Economic Partnerships that have been established are viewed as an important part of the drive to achieve inclusive growth³³.</p> <p>The establishment of the Poverty and Inequality Commission (PIC)³⁴ is also relevant to this recommendation. Initially set up by the Scottish Government in 2017 as a non-statutory advisory group, as of July 2019 it is now a statutory organisation. According to the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017³⁵, the PIC should provide advice to Ministers on Child Poverty Delivery Plans and (according to its own website) ‘comment... on annual progress towards the targets and what further progress is needed to meet the targets’. The Public Services Reform (Poverty and Inequality Commission) (Scotland) Order 2018³⁶ widened the Commission’s remit to cover: ‘advising Scottish Ministers on any matter relating to poverty or inequality in Scotland, including the impact of policies and the use of resources in reducing poverty and inequality; monitoring progress in reducing poverty and inequality in Scotland; promoting the reduction of poverty and inequality in Scotland’.</p> <p>The PIC has commissioned/published various pieces of relevant research. This includes commissioned</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>research into Inclusive Growth (published 2019)³⁷. Both that report, and the Commission’s own response to it³⁸, set out various recommendations for Scottish Government economic policy, including being clearer what they actually mean by the concept of ‘inclusive growth’, and embedding it in ‘flagship policies’ and at the heart of economic policy. Other relevant work has also been commissioned by the PIC e.g. into Transport & Poverty, and Housing Wealth Inequality. It has also made recommendations on extending support for families in place of free school meals during holiday periods.</p> <p>It is also worth highlighting that the aforementioned 2017 Child Poverty Act³⁵ committed the Scottish Government to reduce relative child poverty to 10% by 2030; in contrast the UK government abolished child poverty targets in 2016³⁹.</p> <p>It is worth noting that prior to the establishment of the Commission, Oxfam Scotland produced a report detailing ways in which the Commission could bring about change by ‘building a more equal Scotland’⁴⁰. There is some overlap between that report’s recommendations and those included in the 2016 excess mortality report.</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>2. Ownership: policies which reduce inequalities in the ownership of capital (e.g. land, housing and shares) are likely to contribute to greater equality of incomes. Models of co-operative ownership (e.g. of companies or land) also have potential to enhance equity.</p>	<p>The Land Reform Act 2016 and the subsequent establishment of the Scottish Land Commission (SLC) in 2017 is relevant to this recommendationⁱⁱⁱ. A ‘key part’ of the SLC’s strategic plan is ‘to examine options for future land reform, including the concentration of land ownership in Scotland. The Commission is reviewing tax and fiscal arrangements, examining constraints on the supply of land for housing, including land banking; and looking at options to bring vacant and derelict land into productive use. It is also assessing whether better use could be made of common-good land and reviewing the effectiveness of right to buy mechanisms’⁴⁵.</p> <p>The Commission has published research into the scale and concentration of private ownership of land in Scotland^{46,47}: on the back of that, it recommended ‘reviewing and investigating policy options to encourage a more diverse pattern of private ownership and investment’: ‘diversity’ of ownership relates to reducing concentration of land ownership, enabling opportunities of ownership and access to citizens. The recommendations have been</p>	<p>Mixed progress. Through the work of the Scottish Land Commission, the Scottish Government appears to be actively pursuing means to change the concentration – and thereby inequalities in – land ownership in Scotland, albeit that policy discussions (in response to the SLC’s recommendations) are still ongoing. The creation of a publicly owned energy company aside – and despite media speculation regarding future ownership of Scotland’s train services – little else has changed with regard to public versus private ownership of state assets. Housing is discussed elsewhere in this paper.</p>

ⁱⁱⁱ The remit of the Scottish Land Commission is ‘to review the effectiveness and impact of our laws and policies relating to land, and to make recommendations to Scottish Ministers on future land reform’⁴⁵

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>welcomed by the Scottish Government and work is in progress to take them forward⁴⁸.</p> <p>The SLC have also produced recommendations on community ownership and ‘right to buy’⁴⁹. These were effectively aimed at making community ownership a more ‘normal’ option for communities, particularly within urban settings. These recommendations were also welcomed by Ministers, and the SLC is now working with civil servants in order to see their implementation⁴⁸.</p> <p>Other relevant developments include the fact that the Scottish Government announced that it is to establish, by March 2021, a publicly-owned energy company which includes the potential for low-income groups to be facilitated onto lower tariffs⁵⁰.</p>	
<p>3. Income and corporate taxation: increased tax take and greater progressivity in taxation (i.e. a steeper marginal taxation as incomes increase and a fairer alternative to the council tax) would reduce income inequalities and provide greater resources for redistribution and public services.</p>	<p>Income tax: the Scotland Act 2016 provided the Scottish Parliament with the power to set income tax rates and bands (with the exception of personal allowance)²⁵. New Scottish rates and bands were first set in February 2018 (and the same rates have been maintained in 2019/20 and 2020/21). These could perhaps best be described as very moderately more progressive than the previous rates and bands. Impact on overall income distribution (and therefore on health inequalities) is likely to be negligible. Ongoing modelling analyses of those effects have</p>	<p>There has been moderate progress: income tax bands and rates are now more progressive in Scotland than in the rest of the UK, albeit only to a small degree; and although further Scottish Parliament talks are planned, there have been no changes to the council tax system.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>confirmed the relatively small impact, although nonetheless it has also demonstrated that the rates and bands are more progressive in this sense than those in operation in the rest of the UK⁵¹.</p> <p>Council tax: there have been no significant reforms to the council tax system, although the ‘freeze’ on the basic rate of council tax was stopped in 2017, and there were some minor ‘reforms’ introduced in 2017. Under pressure from the Scottish Greens, the current Scottish Government administration has agreed to convene cross-party talks on replacing council tax, stating that it would publish legislation before the end of the current parliament in March 2021 if agreement could be reached.</p> <p>Corporation tax: this is reserved to Westminster. As the excess mortality report’s recommendations were aimed at Scottish and local government, the inclusion of corporation tax was, on reflection, inappropriate. However, it is nonetheless worth noting that in 2015 corporation tax was reduced from 20% to 19%, and the following year the UK government announced that in 2020 it would be reduced further – to 17%: a measure that was likely to further exacerbate inequalities in society. However, this was revised in the March 2020 Budget in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the tax</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	now remains at 19% ⁵² .	
<p>4. Wealth and asset taxation: there is a need to identify ways of redistributing assets more fairly (e.g. land) and taxing the proceeds of wealth (e.g. through a more progressive Land & Buildings Transactions Tax).</p>	<p>The Land and Buildings Transaction Tax was introduced to replace Stamp Duty Land Tax in 2015⁵³. It is deemed to be ‘more progressive’ as ‘the charge is more proportionate to the actual price of the property’. Community ‘right to buy’ (mentioned above) is again relevant here as one of its aims is to distribute land more equally, as are the above-mentioned proposed discussions regarding changes to the council tax system.</p>	<p>Moderate progress: the new Land and Buildings Transaction Tax is deemed more progressive, and changes to community right to buy are under discussion; as stated, potential changes to the council tax system will be the subject of future Scottish Parliament debate.</p>
<p>5. ‘Fair work’ and wages: support the vision set out in the Fair Work Framework^{54,55}, to ensure that all work in Scotland offers security, fulfilment and respect. This would include the introduction of a Scottish living wage at a level which exceeds that proposed by the UK government, and which would reduce the ratio between the highest and lowest earners. Greater income security (e.g. by providing a guarantee of hours for those who wish them) is another important component of wages policy. Removing barriers to worker organisation and ownership may also ensure that there is a rebalancing of power between the owners of wealth and those who work to</p>	<p>Five overlapping issues are highlighted within this lengthy recommendation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting the vision set out in the ‘fair work’ framework’: the ‘Fair work action plan’ lists various ‘achievements’ in this regard⁵⁶. These include: exceeding the original target for the number of Scottish-based living wage accredited employers; achieving almost 600 Scottish ‘Business Pledge’ signatories (this is in terms of one of the ‘inclusive growth’ related aims of the 2015 economic strategy); introducing Statutory Guidance on ‘Addressing Fair Work Practices’, including the Real Living Wage in procurement and supporting the ‘Best Practice Guidance’ and 	<p>Reasonable progress within a limited sphere of influence: there have been meaningful attempts at implementing ‘fair work’ related policy, albeit that (a) as the proposed measurement framework is still under development, it is difficult to quantify success, and (b) with employment law reserved to Westminster, the impact of Scottish legislation in this area will always be limited. Nonetheless, there have been encouraging developments in terms of numbers of Real Living Wage employers, implementation of the Real Living Wage within Scottish public sector pay policy, and evidence of increased pay levels among the lowest paid public sector workers compared</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>create it (e.g. through greater collective bargaining). Although employment law remains a reserved matter, the Scottish Parliament has influence over public sector pay and the supply chain of the public sector.</p>	<p>Toolkit; introducing the Workplace Equality Fund to deliver employer-led innovative solutions to overcome workforce inequality. An assessment of progress at both national and local level will be helped by (still ongoing) work to develop a Fair Work Measurement Framework. It is also notable that Scottish Enterprise strategy is now also explicit about implementing a “Fair Work First” strategy e.g. in terms of ‘making job-related grants contingent on fair work practices and considering whether to apply this more widely across all grants and services’, and ‘developing support and advice for businesses to support fair work practices, including employing disadvantaged groups’⁵⁷.</p> <p>2. Introducing a Scottish Living Wage: this is a reserved, rather than devolved, issue. Nonetheless, there are a number of relevant updates:</p> <p>a. As of April 2020, the UK minimum wage has been increased to £8.72, £8.20, £6.45, £4.55, and £4.15 per hour for those aged 25+, 21-24, 18-20, <18 years and apprentices respectively); the first component of that (for those aged 25 years</p>	<p>with those in England.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>and above) is of course referred to as the 'national living wage' but the level set is below that recommended by the Real Living Wage Foundation (currently £9.30 per hour).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. A voluntary Living Wage Employer scheme has been introduced in Scotland to encourage employers to pay at least the Real Living Wage hourly rate, but this is not statutory. c. The Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy for 2019-2020⁵⁸ commits to paying a minimum of the Real Living Wage rate to all employees of devolved public bodies in Scotland. d. There is also some suggestion of progress in numbers of employees earning at or above the Real Living Wage level⁵⁹. e. It is also worth noting that Health Scotland's Triple I project emphasised the benefits (in terms of, ultimately, impacting on health inequalities) of increasing the amount of the Real Living Wage⁶⁰. 	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>3. Greater income security (e.g. by providing a guarantee of hours for those who wish them): this also relates more to reserved, rather than devolved, policy.</p> <p>4. Encouraging both participation in unions ('removing barriers to worker organisation') and in establishing co-operatives (worker ownership): the statutory powers in this area relate to UK employment law and is not devolved to Scotland. However, with regard to worker ownership, one theme emerging from local government is to explore models of plural ownership for sectors of the economy as part of work to achieve 'inclusive growth'⁶¹.</p> <p>5. Influence over public sector pay: recent analyses of trends in earnings data showed greater relative increases in earnings among the lowest paid in the public sector compared to the private sector (and notably more so in Scotland than in England)⁶². This was deemed attributable in part to the Scottish Government's Scottish Living Wage accreditation initiative, as well as – potentially – pay agreements for the lowest paid NHS staff in Scotland. The aforementioned increase in the minimum wage by the UK</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>government in 2016 was also relevant, as is the (also aforementioned) Scottish Public Sector Pay Policy for 2019-2020.</p>	
<p>6. Industrial policy: diversify the economy to foster more resilience to change (e.g. reduce reliance on the financial services sector and oil industry) and provide support for those sectors which produce high quality and well-paid jobs in areas of greatest need.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government’s 2015 economic strategy³² contains some references to industrial policy (including the need to ‘reindustrialise’), as well as the need for a ‘diverse business base’, but there is arguably no clear discussion of specific policies in this regard. The UK government has since published an industrial strategy for the UK as a whole⁶³, which includes a specific mention of Scotland⁶⁴.</p> <p>The creation of capital investment funds for cities and regions (the ‘growth deals’) is also relevant to the industrial strategy and should be one means of achieving the diversification in the economy that is intended. However, specific policy details are sparse, and, as stated later, the impact of this capital investment remains very unclear⁶⁵.</p>	<p>No clear progress. No clear evidence of the implementation of any relevant policies in this area.</p>
<p>7. Social security: the social security system must ensure that all in society have sufficient income, and provide the basis from which people can develop their skills and provide for the needs of their families. This would involve increased levels of protection and less conditionality, such as would be the case with</p>	<p>There are a number of relevant points to note in terms of social security in Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scotland Act 2016 saw the administration of 11 social security benefits devolved to Scotland. The benefits are mainly aimed at carers, disabled people and those who are ill (they 	<p>Notable progress with regard to the promise of a fairer, human-rights based Scottish social security system, and implementation of helpful additional social security benefits for the most vulnerable. However, as in so many other areas, the broader context of the vast majority of social security payments being reserved to</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>a Citizen's Income⁶⁶. It will be important to use all opportunities offered by the partial devolution of benefits in the Scotland Act 2016²⁵, and to build on existing mitigation (e.g. on housing benefit changes), to protect geographical, equality groups, and socioeconomic populations at greatest risk. If possible, this should include reversing the effects of UK government cuts and reforms (e.g. to tax credits, incapacity benefits, housing benefit and child benefits), thereby ensuring the provision of a more effective 'safety net' for the most vulnerable in society. In addition, there may be opportunities to change the administration and culture of (aspects) of the system to one that is centred around the needs of claimants.</p>	<p>include, for example, Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance, and Disability Living Allowance). In addition, new social security benefits are also being introduced: the Scottish Child Payment (previously an 'income supplement') for low-income families, and a new 'best start' grant for low-income families with young children⁶⁷. Social Security Scotland (the agency set up to manage the benefits) is now operational, with some payments made since 2018. A public consultation on Scottish social security was carried out in 2016. The Scottish Government's response to this promised a system that would be based on 'a human rights based approach, ensuring that the principles of dignity, fairness and respect are threaded through every decision that we make'⁶⁸.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In June 2019 the introduction of the new Scottish Child Payment was brought forward from 2022 to early 2021 (for families with children under six years old). • Related to the above (and as stated earlier), the Scottish Parliament has passed the Child Poverty Act which outlines a commitment to eradicate child poverty³⁵. 	<p>Westminster, and the devastating impact of UK government 'welfare reform', limits enormously the impact of these changes within the Scottish system.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) – financial assistance to meet additional housing costs for those in receipt of housing benefit^{iv} – was transferred to the Scottish Government (from the UK government Department of Work & Pensions (DWP)) in April 2017. The DHP budget has also increased notably by the Scottish Government, in part to compensate people affected by the UK government ‘bedroom tax’⁶⁹. • The Scottish Welfare Fund, a grant scheme (delivered by local authorities) to provide emergency money for people in need, was devolved to the Scottish Government in 2013. <p>Some recent modelling work has been undertaken (using the ‘Triple I’ model) to estimate the likely effect on inequalities in income (and therefore health) of increasing the payment levels of these devolved benefits. Unsurprisingly, increases were associated with positive effects⁵¹.</p> <p>With regards to a Citizen’s Income (also known as Basic Income or Universal Basic Income), a study on the feasibility of conducting pilots, involving four</p>	

^{iv} Housing benefit – or the housing element of Universal Credit

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>local authorities (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Fife and North Ayrshire), is due to report in June 2020. However, with the relevant powers reserved to Westminster, the pilots will not be able to be fully implemented without either devolution of further powers, or legislative changes at Westminster.</p>	
<p>8. Addressing the costs of living: reducing costs which impact most on the poorest groups (including childcare, housing, heating, transport and food) relative to income is an important component in a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality. In particular:</p>		
<p>a. The creation of an ‘anti-poverty childcare system’ is important. This is a specific proposal by the JRF, and is based on flexible, year-round childcare provision (as already exists for school-age education), professionally qualified staff earning salaries comparable with those working in schools, and an affordable fee system which includes free access to childcare for those on low incomes. Evidence cited in the JRF proposals suggest such a transformation in pre-school childcare would be cost effective in the long run as later savings (e.g. from</p>	<p>In 2017 the Scottish Government announced it would extend, by 2020, free entitlement to nursery places (‘funded early learning and childcare’) from 600 to 1140 hours a year for all three and four-year olds and ‘eligible two-year olds’⁷⁰. Accompanying, and subsequent, action plans^{71,72} have confirmed this commitment, as well as stipulating actions regarding degree courses and other qualifications for childcare professionals. The latter includes the allocation of ‘an additional graduate’ (defined as ‘either a teacher with early years expertise, or a graduate practitioner with, or working towards, the BA Childhood Practice award’) to nurseries in deprived neighbourhoods (a total of 435 graduates</p>	<p>Good progress in terms of expansion of free nursery places.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>reduced social security payments, higher pay, lower costs to criminal justice systems) would exceed the investment many times over. More importantly, such a transformation would have major benefits across all Scottish society, potentially conferring protection against future vulnerabilities.</p>	<p>across the 32 local authority areas, and based on identification of nurseries in the 20% most deprived areas). A 'skills development plan'⁷³ has been developed 'to support the growth of the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) workforce'.</p>	
<p>b. Reduction of the 'poverty premium' (i.e. the proportionally higher costs of goods and services faced by those living in poverty). New measures in relation to this issue have been proposed by the JRF. Specific recommendations include: changes to the role and remit of competition authorities and regulatory bodies (e.g. strategies to identify, monitor and reduce disadvantage among those in poverty); establishment of innovation funds to encourage third sector and not-for-profit companies to develop products appropriate to the needs of those on low incomes (e.g. specialist insurance policies); enabling interventions such as 'collective switching' in the energy market; facilitating 'transactional banking' based on partnerships between banks</p>	<p>There are six specific recommendations here:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes to the role and remit of competition authorities and regulatory bodies: this relates to reserved powers and is thus not considered further here. 2. Funds to encourage third sector and not-for-profit companies to develop products appropriate to the needs of those on low incomes (e.g. specialist insurance policies): although some services aimed at those on lower incomes already exist (e.g. lower insurance premiums for some social housing tenants, more affordable credit from Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) and not-for-profit organisations such as Fair For You⁷⁴), we are not aware of any new developments regarding new funding for this purpose. 	<p>Very limited progress, although the proposed publicly owned energy company, the Scottish microfinance fund (albeit that the latter is more about supporting businesses rather than individuals in need), and energy efficiency in the private rented sector (discussed in more detail with regard to policy recommendation number 13) are relevant.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>and third sector organisations; enabling access to small loans (e.g. through developments to the social finance market or by provision of ‘micro-finance’ in the banking sector); and various initiatives to improve energy efficiency (and thereby reduce costs).</p>	<p>3. Interventions such as ‘collective switching’ in the energy market: as stated earlier, the Scottish Government is committed to establishing, by March 2021, a publicly-owned energy company which will include the potential for low-income groups to be facilitated onto lower tariffs⁵⁰. This commitment remains, despite the recent collapse of the SG-backed not-for-profit energy supplier, Our Power⁷⁵.</p> <p>4. Facilitating ‘transactional banking’ based on partnerships between banks and third sector organisations: we are not aware of any relevant updates.</p> <p>5. Enabling access to small loans: the Scottish Microfinance Fund has been established with the objective of supporting enterprise in Scotland⁷⁶. The Scottish National Investment Bank (to be established in 2020) may also be relevant to this⁷⁷.</p> <p>6. Energy efficiency improvements: these policies are discussed under housing.</p>	
<p>c. Alongside the establishment of a living wage, the implementation of the JRF’s proposal for a ‘living rent’, whereby</p>	<p>There have been no developments in terms of the suggested ‘living rent’. A facility has been established for local authorities to apply for areas to</p>	<p>No meaningful progress.</p> <p>It is probably fair to say that <i>within the social</i></p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>social housing rental costs would be directly linked to local earnings^v, would make housing costs across the country fairer, and lower the cost of living for some sections of the population.</p>	<p>be designated as ‘rent pressure zones’ (RPZs) within which private sector rents can be capped⁷⁸. However, despite this having been considered by a number of local authorities, at the time of writing no RPZs have yet been established, and there are doubts about the feasibility of gathering the necessary local data to enable RPZ status to be given.</p>	<p><i>housing sector</i>, the concept of a living rent has been less of an issue in Scotland compared with England because social housing tends to be more affordable north of the border. As discussed elsewhere in this paper, however, rent levels in the <i>private rented sector</i> are a greater concern.</p>
<p>d. The cost of public transport is significant for those living in poverty. This is particularly the case for those living in Glasgow’s peripheral estates and Scotland’s rural areas, where amenities are few and journeys to higher amenity locations are long, expensive and can involve a number of stages. While transport services may be better managed locally, free or subsidised transport for those on low incomes could significantly improve accessibility to education, employment and services, particularly for those living in more isolated locations.</p>	<p>A number of updates are relevant to this recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free bus travel for people under 19 years of age was included within the 2020/21 Scottish budget, and is due to be implemented in early 2021. This will be particularly welcome in Glasgow, where the ‘First Bus’ company’s fares have increased considerably since publication of the excess mortality report, including a notable increase in children’s fares in 2018. The latter had been the focus of considerable criticism⁷⁹. • In June 2018 the Transport (Scotland) Bill⁸⁰ was published. It includes measures which 	<p>Free bus travel for those under 19 years old represents considerable progress for one section of the population. Many other transport-related strategies and plans appear to be under development. However, given that an estimated one million people in Scotland live at risk of ‘transport poverty’⁸⁸, considerable challenges (not least in relation to “unaffordable and unreliable local public transport... limiting access to job opportunities for residents of low-income neighbourhoods”⁸⁹) remain.</p>

^v More precisely, local *lower quartile* earnings.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>will provide “local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) with the flexibility to improve bus services through partnership working with operators or, where there is a good case for doing so, local franchising or running services themselves”⁸¹.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new National Transport Strategy was published in February 2020⁸². The strategy puts forward a ‘vision’ for transport in Scotland which, among other things, promotes equality: it states that Scotland’s transport “will be affordable for all: people have different incomes and our transport system will not exclude people from mobility by making it unaffordable. We will target actions to deliver the Strategy towards those needing most help, including those living in poverty”⁸³. However, specific policy actions to help achieve this are not listed. • Transport Scotland’s 20-year investment plan – the Strategic Transport Projects Review – is under development, and also provides the opportunity to address 	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>affordability of transport⁸⁴.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Poverty & Inequality Commission (set up by the SG) published a report on poverty and transport in 2019⁸⁵. It set out 13 recommendations including that Transport Scotland should explore and pilot a range of ways of making travel more affordable. • Regionally, within Strathclyde a new Regional Transport Strategy is being developed, which again gives an opportunity for addressing the issue of affordability (and indeed the current delivery plan for 2018/19 – 2020/21 includes a set of ‘strategic priorities and actions for Access for All’⁸⁶) • Maintenance of the existing Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) scheme for some ferry routes is important in reducing transport costs for island communities; however, this does not yet cover all routes (e.g. to Orkney and Shetland)⁸⁷. 	
<p>9. As others have previously recommended (e.g. Oxfam Scotland⁹⁰, The Poverty Alliance⁹¹), the Scottish Government should adopt a ‘poverty</p>	<p>The Fairer Scotland duty puts an onus on particular public bodies to consider how they can reduce inequalities when making strategic decisions⁹². We</p>	<p>Unclear progress: the implementation of the Fairer Scotland duty represents some progress in itself; however, the impact of this is unclear,</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>proofing’ approach to all policies and major spending decisions.</p>	<p>are not aware of any evaluation or assessment of impact of this policy.</p>	<p>given the lack of any evaluation. It would be extremely helpful – and important – for the SG to demonstrate how the duty has been applied, and the impact it has had.</p>
<p>10. Related to this, and in recognition of the unique health challenges facing Scotland, the Scottish Government should adopt the World Health Organization’s principle of ‘Health in all policies’⁹³ in order to more explicitly address issues relating to the social determinants of health and health inequalities in Scotland.</p>	<p>A similar recommendation was made by the recent Health Improvement Commission as part of the Public Health Reform process⁹⁴. That process resulted in six public health priorities for the country, and moves are afoot within the Scottish Government to facilitate a ‘Whole System Approach’⁹⁵ to each of the priorities which should incorporate a ‘health in all policies’ approach. However, at the time of writing this is still to be confirmed/finalised.</p>	<p>Some progress, although details are currently unclear.</p>

Table 2. Housing and the physical environment (recommendations 11-18)

The report stated: *Another key aspect of vulnerability identified in the report relates to the physical environment – particularly (and specifically in relation to Glasgow) the availability of good quality housing and the distribution of this housing within the city among social groups. Partly as a result of the substantial deindustrialisation experienced in Glasgow, and of the need to demolish substandard housing, there remains a large quantity of derelict land in the city. Policy to improve housing in the city and the physical environment are therefore important, and could include:*

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>11. A substantial expansion of the social housing building programme of high quality, low rent, sustainable, social housing. The JRF sees the expansion of affordable housing as being a priority call upon new borrowing and bond issuing powers afforded to the Scottish Parliament.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government committed to spend over £3.3 billion to deliver 50,000 affordable homes, of which 35,000 will be for social rent, by March 2021. Latest statistics published by Scottish Government in March 2020 show an increase in the supply of affordable housing as at December 2019⁹⁶. While this progress is welcome, there is still a significant demand for affordable housing in Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are approximately 160,000 households on the social housing waiting list⁹⁷. However, this is likely to be a significant underestimate of the true number of people waiting for social housing in Scotland, with some estimates suggesting the figure is likely to be over 200,000^{vi 98}. 	<p>Good progress in terms of achievements to date, albeit that there remain many challenges in terms of the scale of social housing need, the provision of accessible housing, and the impact of UK government ‘austerity’ measures on homelessness¹¹⁰. Furthermore, looking forward beyond 2021, a lot of other uncertainties remain.</p>

^{vi} This is likely to be an underestimate because six of Scotland's 32 local authorities (Glasgow City Council; Argyll and Bute; Dumfries and Galloway; Western Isles; Scottish Borders ; Inverclyde) have transferred all of their housing stock to registered social landlords (RSLs) and do not operate a common housing register; thus, their waiting lists are not included in these figures. As prospective tenants can apply to multiple RSLs and be added to their waiting lists, it is not possible to get an accurate estimate of waiting list sizes in these local authority areas. It has been estimated that there could be around 45,000 households on waiting lists in these six areas.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of single person households is projected to increase from almost 900,000 (36% of all households in 2016) to over 1.1 million in 2041 (41%)⁹⁹. Most of the household growth will be among those aged 65 years and over, a group more likely to live alone with greater healthcare needs. • Housing tenure has changed considerably since the turn of the century, with a reduction in social housing and an increasing number of households relying on the Private Rented Sector (PRS) to meet their needs⁹⁷. A notable proportion of the increase in demand for PRS accommodation is from households in poverty, who would historically have been housed in the Social Rented Sector (SRS)¹⁰⁰. In 2017 the new Private Residential Tenancy was introduced, providing more security of tenure and protecting tenants from frequent and unfair rent increases¹⁰¹. However, between 2017 and 2018, 15 out of 18 areas of Scotland saw private rent increases; these ranged from 6.5% in Lothian to 0.3% in Perth and Kinross¹⁰². These regional trends combine to show an increase in average monthly rents at a Scotland level. When analysed over a longer time period 	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>(2010-2018), nationally the increase in rents exceeded the rate of inflation: however, that was almost exclusively driven by high increases in Glasgow and, especially, Edinburgh¹⁰².</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018 almost 100,000 disabled people were on housing waiting lists, and analysis of 2015 Scottish Household Survey data suggests the number of wheelchair user households in Scotland with unmet housing needs was 17,226 (19.1% of all wheelchair user households). This is projected to increase to over 30,000 by 2024¹⁰³. • In February 2018 Shelter Scotland published a review of local authority Strategic Housing Investment Plans, highlighting inconsistency in the supply of accessible housing across Scotland and the need for greater understanding of how the ‘more homes’ programme¹⁰⁴ will respond to local need in relation to the size, type and location of homes¹⁰⁵. • There has been an increase in homelessness applications in the last two years¹⁰⁶, highlighting the need for further attention on prevention of homelessness – for example, ensuring adequate 	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>supply and support for tenancy sustainment, including a focus on health needs of people who are at risk of becoming homeless.</p> <p>Looking to the future, in the 2018-19 Programme for Government, the Scottish Government promised to consult “on a wider vision for housing in 2040 and the steps we all need to take to get there”¹⁰⁷. The resulting consultation on ‘Housing to 2040’ was published in 2019¹⁰⁸, with stakeholders asked for “innovative, bold and imaginative proposals”, including those relating to increasing accessibility and affordability, increasing energy efficiency and lowering carbon emissions, improving quality and standards, and improving the space around our homes.</p> <p>However, there remains continuing uncertainty regarding future investment in the housing sector¹⁰⁹, and it is hoped that through ‘Housing to 2040’, a clear strategic direction will emerge to ensure local authorities can continue to deliver on progress to date and provide good quality homes for our most vulnerable communities.</p>	
<p>12. An extension of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard¹¹¹ to the private rented sector and tied housing.</p>	<p>This recommendation is discussed under three headings: the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) itself; the Scottish Repairing Standard (SRS); and housing quality more generally.</p>	<p>Variable progress: although it has been the subject of discussion, the SHQS has not yet been extended to the private rented sector (PRS) (the original recommendation). Nonetheless various relevant changes have</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p><i>Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)</i></p> <p>The SHQS – introduced in 2004 to apply to <u>social housing</u> only – remains the main way in which social housing quality is measured^{vii}. In 2016 the Scottish Government proposed a cross-tenure Common Housing Quality Standard following (in 2015) the establishment of a Common Housing Quality Standard Forum: this enabled discussion with and between stakeholders on key issues affecting house condition and informed recommendations for a new common housing standard. The final report from the Forum, published in November 2016, highlighted the need for a ‘sequence of harmonisations’ which could be the subject of a series of consultations (including public consultations) to seek views on potential changes to existing standards¹¹².</p> <p><i>The Scottish Repairing Standard (SRS)</i></p> <p>The SRS concerns the <u>private rented sector</u>: it refers to the obligations of private landlords ‘to make sure properties meet a minimum physical standard’¹¹³. In 2017 the Scottish Government consulted on changes to</p>	<p>been implemented, including to the SRS, within an overall aim of harmonising standards between sectors.</p> <p>More generally, while there are examples of policies which have been driving improvements in standards within the PRS, the landscape is extremely complex. ‘A place to stay, A place to call home’ (the Scottish Government’s strategy for the private rented sector)¹¹⁸ was published in 2013 and could be considered out of date. It may be time to consider opportunities to review and refresh this strategy in light of significant policy developments relating to the PRS.</p> <p>Furthermore, although this recommendation specifically concerned <i>housing quality</i> within the PRS, there are other important issues within that sector which arguably should also have been the focus of the policy recommendations. It is well understood that the PRS is, for a variety of reasons, where many</p>

^{vii} Different housing quality standards apply to owner-occupied, private rented and social rented homes. With regard to the latter, the SHQS means social landlords must make sure their tenants' homes are: energy efficient; safe and secure; not seriously damaged; and have kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition. The SHQS is based on five broad criteria, within which there are 55 different elements of housing quality. The five criteria are: ‘A - Must meet the Tolerable Standard (i.e. the basic legal minimum standard); B - Must be Free from Serious Disrepair; C - Must be Energy Efficient; D - Must have Modern Facilities and Services; E - Must be Healthy, Safe and Secure’.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>the Repairing Standard which included proposed changes to safe kitchens, food storage, capacity for fridges and freezers and central heating. In March 2019 the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (Modification of Repairing Standard) Regulations 2019 were introduced¹¹⁴. Notable modifications include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporation of the tolerable standard to ensure that a private rented house must meet the statutory tolerable standard. This came into force in March 2019. 2. A requirement to have safely accessible food storage and food preparation space in a private rented house. This will come into force in March 2024 and will be supported by Scottish Government guidance. 3. The existing duty to ensure that heating installations are in a reasonable state of repair and in proper working order was amended to specify that there must be a fixed heating system in a private rented house. This will also come into force in March 2024, supported by Scottish Government guidance. 	<p>of the most vulnerable families end up. Rents are much more expensive compared with the social sector, tenure is far less secure (albeit that recent legislation has helped to address this issue to a degree¹¹⁹), and quality much poorer. Thus, while the recommendation above discusses the third of these issues (housing quality), arguably it should have also addressed price differentials, tenure security, housing service quality and more¹²⁰.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p><i>Housing quality</i></p> <p>Further to this, recent data from the 2018 Scottish House Condition Survey¹¹⁵ highlight that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite a previously improving trend, levels of disrepair increased between 2017 and 2018. In 2018, 75% of all dwellings had some degree of disrepair (up from 68% in 2017), and 57% of households had disrepair to critical elements (up from 50% in 2017). Thirty per cent of dwellings had some instance of urgent disrepair, and 6% had extensive disrepair: both these figures are similar to those in recorded the 2017 survey. • In 2018, 2% (or approximately 50,000) of all dwellings fell below the Tolerable Standard, a notable increase from the 2017 survey. • Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) compliance improved on 2016 levels. In 2018, 41% of Scottish homes failed to meet the SHQS, down from 45% in 2016. Note also that the majority of dwellings falling below the SHQS failed on a single criterion: this accounts for more than eight out of ten failures in the social sector. • Overcrowding levels in Scotland reduced from 3% to 2% (approximately 53,000 households) between 2017 and 2018. It should also be noted – as 	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>highlighted in the excess mortality report – that over the longer term, there has been a notable reduction in overcrowding levels in Scotland: from 18% in 1981 to 3% in 2011 (based on a slightly different definition to that used in the Scottish House Condition Survey).</p> <p>It should also be noted that the quality of Scotland’s older tenement housing stock has been highlighted as an area of particular concern. Recently this led to, first, the establishment of a Scottish Parliamentary Working Group to examine means by which owners of tenement properties could be assisted and/or compelled to maintain properties¹¹⁶; and following this, in December 2019 the Scottish Government published both a response to the Working Group’s report, and an action plan to take forward recommendations¹¹⁷.</p>	
<p>13. Targeting cold and damp housing and people who struggle to afford fuel by implementing affordable heating, ventilation and quality energy efficiency measures in all housing both new and existing properties (without the need to apply for grants) with a focus on private rented and owner-occupied sectors.</p>	<p>This recommendation is discussed under three related headings: <i>fuel poverty</i>; <i>energy efficiency</i>; and <i>affordable housing</i>.</p> <p><i>Fuel poverty</i></p> <p>Fuel poverty levels in Scotland remain very high. In 2018, 25% of households were living in fuel poverty after housing costs, with those on low incomes or living in rural or island communities particularly affected¹¹⁵. On average the social and private sector had similar</p>	<p>Notable progress: a target of the eradication of fuel poverty has been written into law, and a strategy to achieve this is due to be published this year. Furthermore, the legislation includes a more stretching definition – based on the Minimum Income Standard – than that used for the previous fuel poverty target (which was not achieved in 2016¹²⁸).</p> <p>It is also worth noting that the current national ‘conversation’ on ‘Housing to 2040’¹⁰⁸</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>rates of fuel poverty at 24% and 27% respectively in 2017. It is crucial that all tenures, including owner-occupied and private rented properties, should achieve an equally high standard of energy efficiency (discussed further below), despite challenges for some properties due to their age, design, baseline condition or access to the most carbon neutral energy sources. However, with regard to social housing, a 2019 survey of Housing Associations reported increases in tenants disconnecting their heating supply to cut costs: this was deemed to be largely attributable to UK government ‘welfare reform’ measures¹²¹. It is also important not to overlook the issue of rurality in relation to fuel poverty. In 2017, households off the national gas grid and using oil as their primary heating fuel saw the greatest increase in fuel poverty rates with 40% estimated to be in fuel poverty, up from 26% in 2016. Heating oil is more commonly used in rural areas than urban, and therefore this has contributed to the fuel poverty rate in rural areas.</p> <p>In 2019 the Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act (2019) came into force. It recognises four drivers of fuel poverty in Scotland: energy efficiency, income (earnings and benefits), energy costs and how energy is used in the home¹²². The Act sets a target of the eradication of fuel poverty by 2040 – albeit that ‘eradication’ is defined as no more</p>	<p>considers tackling fuel poverty in the context of improved energy efficiency; however, in order to eradicate fuel poverty, attention must also be paid to its other recognised drivers: low income and energy use.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>than 5% of households in Scotland being in fuel poverty. The Act also requires Scottish Ministers to prepare a Fuel Poverty Strategy by summer 2020.</p> <p><i>Energy efficiency</i></p> <p>The Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map¹²³ (published in 2018) confirmed the Scottish Government’s intention to bring forward regulations based on Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)^{viii}, requiring landlords of privately rented homes to meet minimum EPC standards from April 2020.</p> <p>In June 2019 the Scottish Government published the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (Scotland) Regulations 2019 which make provision for the introduction and enforcement of minimum standards of energy efficiency within the Private Rented sector¹²⁴. The regulations establish a minimum standard of EPC band E for domestic private rented property, affecting new tenancies from 1 April 2020 and all tenancies from 31 March 2022. Similarly, from 1 April 2022 a landlord cannot let a property unless the EPC has a minimum rating of ‘D’. By 31 March 2025 all PRS properties will</p>	

^{viii} From the Scottish Government public services website (<https://www.mygov.scot/energy-performance-certificates/>), Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are described as providing information on energy efficiency, and are required when: applying for a completion certificate for a new building; selling a building; renting a building to a new tenant. The EPC provides the building’s energy efficiency rating (‘which gives you an idea of how much fuel bills are likely to be’) and also its ‘environmental impact rating’ (in terms of CO₂ emissions). Both these ratings are on a scale from A to G (A being the optimal).

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>need to have an EPC rating of at least 'D'.</p> <p>(It is worth noting how this compares with requirements for the social housing sector. Refreshed Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2) guidance for social landlords was published in February 2019 with the new milestone: <i>all social housing meets, or can be treated as meeting, EPC Band B (Energy Efficiency rating), or is as energy efficient as practically possible, by the end of December 2032 and within the limits of cost, technology and necessary consent</i>¹²⁵. The 2032 milestone will be supported by a formal review in 2025. Air Quality and Environmental Impact will be included as part of the review and it has been agreed that no social housing should be re-let below EPC Band D from December 2025, subject to temporary specified exemptions).</p> <p>At the time of writing, the Scottish Government are consulting on proposals for improving the energy efficiency of owner-occupied homes. These proposals include legally binding targets and support which could be offered to home-owners to help them meet these targets.</p> <p><i>Affordable housing</i></p> <p>Despite an emphasis in policy documents on the need for 'affordable' housing, in Scotland there is actually no agreed definition of what is meant by the term¹²⁶. Rent</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>affordability plays a crucial role in tackling poverty and is increasingly central to Scottish Government’s strategies, such as the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan⁶⁷ and Housing to 2040¹⁰⁸.</p> <p>While social housing plays a key role in tackling poverty and ensuring access to affordable homes¹²⁷ there have been recent reports of above-inflation rent increases for local authority social housing.</p> <p>Research suggests that high housing costs are one of the biggest drivers of poverty in the UK, especially affecting single adults and families with children. The housing-cost-induced poverty phenomenon means more households, particularly those with children, live in relative and absolute poverty in Scotland every year. The relationship between housing costs and poverty is also influenced by tenure, with social tenants more likely to live in poverty after housing costs have been considered. ‘Every Child, Every Chance’⁶⁷, the delivery plan for reducing child poverty following the 2017 Child Poverty Act³⁵, refers to the importance of warm and affordable housing (specifically referencing housing policy actions described elsewhere in this paper).</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>14. Related to the above, ensuring maintenance and repair funding for social housing is at an adequate level, and is protected from any impact of cuts to public services.</p>	<p>Progress on this is unclear. Housing is part of the responsibility of local government and so funding allocations for maintenance vary across local authorities and between council housing departments and registered social landlords. The funding that is described as coming directly from the Scottish Government for social housing is restricted to new buildings, although there is an obligation to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.</p>	<p>Unknown progress.</p>
<p>15. Strengthening the impact of the Place Standard for Scotland^{129,ix} by: providing ongoing support for its development and delivery; making it a ‘material consideration’ in the spatial planning system for private and public sector development; and investing in support for communities from deprived areas to use it.</p>	<p>National roll out of the Place Standard continues at pace. Latest data shows that there are now over 14,000 individual reported uses and all but one of Scotland’s local authorities are either using it or plan to use it. A new strategic plan has been agreed covering the period 2020-2023 which identifies five key priorities: engaging diverse groups; climate emergency; town centres and local services; housing; and movement and transport. It has also received considerable international support with many countries reporting its use, and it has recently been accredited by the World Health Organization (WHO). Public Health Scotland are also in consultation with WHO regarding it becoming an international collaborating centre for place.</p>	<p>Significant progress.</p>

^{ix} The Place Standard has been developed by Scottish Government Architecture & Place, NHS Health Scotland and Architecture & Design Scotland. Its purpose is “to support the delivery of high quality places in Scotland and to maximise the potential of the physical and social environment in supporting health, wellbeing and a high quality of life”.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>The Planning (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament in June 2019¹³⁰ and the current national planning framework (NPF) is currently being reviewed. Both of these identify significant opportunities for public health. For the first time NPF identifies health as a specific priority for the planning process and all national and local developments will now require a health impact assessment before planning permission is granted. The themes identified in the Place Standard will be central to these processes.</p> <p>The Scottish Government and COSLA have agreed to adopt a 'Place Principle' to help overcome organisational and sectoral boundaries, to encourage better collaboration and community involvement, and improve the impact of combined energy, resources and investment. Application of the Place Standard Tool will be a significant element of the approach¹³¹.</p>	
<p>16. Improving greenspace access and quality in deprived areas by: providing access to good quality greenspace within 300m of the home for all; addressing current inequalities in greenspace quality; and supporting engagement in outdoor activities (including spaces for all to support intergenerational mixing and</p>	<p>Access to green and blue spaces^x is a national performance indicator for the Scottish Government's revised National Performance Framework (NPF)¹³². It is expressed as the proportion of adults who live within a five-minute walk of their local green or blue space. It has remained virtually unchanged for the previous five years.</p>	<p>Variable progress: there has been no progress with regard to the amount or quality of greenspace (indeed, quality appears to be worsening); however, helpful developments are under way regarding the restoration of vacant and derelict land and the statutory requirement in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 for all local authorities to produce an</p>

^x 'Blue space' is usually defined in terms of outdoor water environments.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>spaces to play that challenge children and allow for risk taking).</p>	<p>In relation to quality of greenspace, Greenspace Scotland’s latest survey shows quality is declining, particularly in the most deprived areas¹³³.</p> <p>The Central Scotland Green Network¹³⁴ is a national development within the Government’s National Planning Framework. Its aim is to change the face of Central Scotland by restoring and improving the rural and urban landscape of the area. It has a number of significant work programmes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant and derelict land: transforming places by bringing Scotland’s vacant and derelict land back to life through permanent, interim or temporary greening. • Disadvantaged areas: working with disadvantaged communities to address environmental incivilities where they live. • Active travel: delivering strategic greened access routes to encourage journeys on foot for work, education and shopping. • ‘Urban greening’: increasing urban greening to increase the resilience of our cities and towns in a changing climate and to encourage nature. 	<p>open space strategy.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenspace for living, health and wellbeing: ensuring every home in central Scotland has access to attractive, safe and well-maintained greenspace, and the development of greenspace as a healthcare asset. • Landscape: restoring and improving our rural and urban landscapes, connecting the green and blue spaces in towns and cities with the wider countryside and coast. • Outdoor learning and play – provide access for all children and young people to high quality outdoor environments which support play, learning, social relationships and emotional and physical wellbeing. <p>One of the Network’s ‘flagship’ projects is the John Muir Way¹³⁵, a 134-mile long route running coast to coast from Helensburgh to Dunbar and accredited as one of ‘Scotland’s Great Trails’¹³⁶. It is managed in partnership with the ten ‘access authorities’ and other key landowners and stakeholders, and lies within ten miles of almost half of Scotland’s population. It provides opportunities for a wide range of social, economic and environmental outcomes.</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>Also of relevance to this recommendation is the fact that the Scottish Land Commission (SLC) is leading a 'task force' aimed at restoring vacant and derelict land in Scotland¹³⁷. The task force will be making recommendations to Government later this year setting out the changes that will be required to policy and practice to transform Scotland's approach to tackling vacant and derelict land¹³⁸.</p> <p>With regard to children's 'play', the Scottish Government has a 'play strategy' for Scotland, with an 'action plan' published back in 2013¹³⁹.</p> <p>There have also been some developments in Glasgow which are relevant to this recommendation. A new 'Open Space' Strategy for the city was adopted in February 2020. This is aimed at enhancing three factors: the 'liveability' of the city; the health and wellbeing of the population (and of the city's 'flora and fauna'); and resilience to issues such as climate change¹⁴⁰. At the same time, the Council has developed a Food Growing Strategy (a statutory requirement of local authorities under the 2015 Community Empowerment Act¹⁴¹), with a public consultation on this work having ended in March 2020¹⁴².</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>17. Improving neighbourhood maintenance according to need and deprivation levels by ensuring that CPPs, Local Authorities and Scottish Government work together to identify mechanisms to support the ongoing maintenance of streets and open, green, and public spaces, and ensure that environmental incivilities, crime and antisocial behaviour do not act as disincentives to their use and enjoyment.</p>	<p>The Scottish Household Survey¹⁴³ monitors respondents' perceptions of the quality of the neighbourhoods in which they reside. The most recent annual report¹⁴⁴ showed that in 2018, 30% of respondents reported that both 'rubbish or litter lying around' and 'animal nuisance' (i.e. including dog fouling) was 'very common' or fairly common in their neighbourhood: this represented increases of 6 and 7 percentage points respectively since 2010. In addition, the figures vary considerably in terms of levels of area deprivation: the percentage of respondents reporting common problems with rubbish/litter ranged from 20% in the least deprived neighbourhoods to 48% in the most deprived areas; the figures for dog fouling and so on ranged from 19% (least deprived) to 41% (most deprived).</p> <p>It is likely that UK government 'austerity' related cuts to public services since 2010 have influenced these figures²².</p> <p>However, the survey also reports decreasing levels of 'antisocial behaviour' such as vandalism/graffiti and 'rowdy behaviour'. The reporting of such problems is, however, again notably higher in the most deprived areas (e.g. 20% reporting vandalism/graffiti as a very/fairly common problem) compared with the least deprived neighbourhoods (e.g. just 4% reporting</p>	<p>Variable progress: neighbourhood quality appears to have worsened, although there have been improvements in antisocial behaviour.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>vandalism/graffiti as such a problem).</p> <p>There has been a downward trend in overall crime rates in Scotland in recent years; however, trends differ for different types of crime (e.g. downward trends in ‘crimes of dishonesty’ and fire-raising/vandalism, and upward trends in sexual crimes)¹⁴⁵.</p>	
<p>18. Improving road safety for pedestrians and cyclists by establishing 20mph zones, area-wide traffic calming schemes, and segregation of pedestrians, cyclists and traffic, as the norm for residential and urban areas.</p>	<p>In 2017 the Scottish Government doubled the active travel budget from £40m to £80m¹⁴⁶. The investment ensures that 10% of the trunk roads budget is now spent on walking and cycling projects. However, it is worth noting that the £80 million figure equates to £14.75 per head which is less than that spent on <i>cycling alone</i> in other leading European countries where active travel is a priority¹⁴⁷.</p> <p>A national ‘active travel taskforce’ was convened “to identify and make recommendations to the Minister for Transport and the Islands on ways to improve delivery of ambitious and inclusive walking and cycling projects in Scotland, helping to create high quality places and communities that support health and wellbeing”. It made its recommendations to the Minister in the form of a report published in June 2018¹⁴⁸.</p> <p>The importance of active travel also features prominently in the independent review of the Cleaner Air for Scotland strategy which was published in August</p>	<p>Notable progress regarding 20mph limits in Glasgow – but not nationally. The city is also seeing considerable investment in safer cycling routes, and has been active in seeking to tackle air pollution in the city centre.</p> <p>Nationally, there have been a number of other relevant developments in relation to active travel: budget increases, a national ‘taskforce’ and ‘Commissioner’, other strategies and plans; however, the impact of all of these is yet to be determined.</p>

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>2019¹⁴⁹; it is also highlighted as relevant to Scotland’s policies in relation to climate change¹⁵⁰. The most recent Programme for Government also emphasises the importance of active travel, mentioning the appointment of an ‘Active Nation Commissioner’ who will ‘act as a national advocate for Active Travel’¹⁵¹.</p> <p>Scotland also has both a national walking strategy¹⁵² and a cycling action plan¹⁵³. More generally, there is a National Transport Strategy, shortened to ‘NTS2’, which has four ‘pillars’, aimed at promoting equality, climate, economy, and health and wellbeing¹⁵⁴.</p> <p>Specifically in relation to 20mph zones, in May 2017 Mark Ruskell MSP proposed a Members bill to replace the current 30mph default speed limit on restricted roads with a 20mph limit¹⁵⁵. The bill was voted on by the Scottish Parliament in June 2019 – and rejected (this was on the back of the Parliament’s rural economy committee refusing to recommend it to the whole Parliament).</p> <p>However, in January 2020 Glasgow City Council announced that the majority of streets in the city will be subject to a new 20mph limit. This will be implemented over the next four years¹⁵⁶.</p> <p>Also within Glasgow, various programmes to improve safer cycling routes (e.g. South City Way¹⁵⁷) are</p>	

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>underway; this also includes the 'Avenues' programme, which will see 20 main thoroughfares in the city transformed by means of reduced traffic lanes, segregated cycle paths, and more. The programme is being funded by the Glasgow City Region City Deal¹⁵⁸.</p> <p>Glasgow City Council also introduced Scotland's first Low Emission Zone in the city centre at the end of 2018 in order to address poor air quality in key streets¹⁵⁹.</p>	

Table 3. Additional actions in relation to local government and partner organisations^{xi} (recommendations 19-25).

The report stated: *A number of the above recommendations relate to local, as well as national, government. Further, specific recommendations relating to local government (including Glasgow in particular) and partner organisations include:*

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>19. The need to recognise, understand and act upon – at the highest levels of local government – the impact of local decision-making on population health. This includes the need to understand the need for – and protective benefits of – strong civic leadership in times of political and economic difficulty.</p>	<p>Of relevance to this is the fact that the recent Review of Public Health in Scotland¹⁶⁰ called for better organisation within public health including, specifically, better links with local authorities and community planning partners; it also called for greater “partnership and collective responsibility” for public health being shared widely across different organisations, sectors, communities and individuals to better address the determinants of population health, as well as particular health priorities: these include local authorities and the third and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>Following these recommendations, the process of public health reform in Scotland is now referred to as a ‘partnership’ between SG and COSLA¹⁶¹, and the new, national organisation, Public Health Scotland, is accountable to both the Scottish Government and COSLA.</p> <p>In addition, in 2019 the Government, together with COSLA launched a review of local governance to</p>	<p>The review of public health in Scotland, and the role of local authorities within that, potentially represents some progress with regard to this recommendation. Clearly, it will not be possible to gain any insights into its impact for some time.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that since publication of the excess mortality report there has been a change of political leadership at Glasgow City Council. The new administration has demonstrated a commitment to community empowerment, reflected both in its Strategic Plan and its committee structures. This is a welcome focus on a key area of local government influence which was highlighted in the report as historically lacking.</p>

^{xi} ‘Partner organisations’ include Health & Social Care Partnerships and Community Planning Partnerships.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	ensure Scotland’s diverse communities have greater control and influence over decisions that affect them most ¹⁶² .	
20. The need to avoid repeating historical mistakes and ensure that we create, and keep together, viable and supportive communities , and build further affordable public sector housing .	While large-scale movement of entire populations to new towns no longer occurs, within deprived areas there is still a presumption in favour of a particular cycle: concentration of deprivation; residualisation; demolition; and subsequent population movement.	Unclear. This was a very broad recommendation, especially with regard to understanding the lessons of history. More specifically, however, there has been notable progress with regard to public sector house-building, as outlined earlier.
21. Local government also has a part to play in distributing income , with progressive use of proceeds from a fairer system of local taxation (e.g. in redistributing resources towards areas of greater need).	This is clearly dependent, in the first instance, on a new system of local taxation being implemented in Scotland – this is discussed earlier in relation to recommendation number 3.	No progress: Implementing this recommendation would obviously require, in the first place, a new system of local taxation: as stated earlier, that is likely to be the subject of future discussion within the Scottish Parliament.
22. There is also an argument that current local authority boundaries prevent adequate redistribution across the country. Given the controversial manner in which the boundaries were created in the 1990s ^{163,164} , the boundaries and/or the funding allocation system for local government should be reviewed with the explicit objective of ascertaining whether any potential changes could more effectively facilitate resource distribution across	While there are no clear moves towards either redrawing local government boundaries or altering funding allocation systems, nonetheless a ‘local governance review’ has been ongoing since 2017 ¹⁶² . The stated aim is to ensure that the different communities within Scotland “have greater control and influence over decisions that affect them most”; the review has therefore been considering “how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local spheres of government, and with communities”. A second phase is due to	No direct progress with regard to this recommendation, albeit that aspects of it remain under review.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
Scotland.	start in 2020.	
23. As with national government, a ‘poverty proofing’ approach to local government (and partner organisation) policy-making should be adopted, alongside the WHO’s ‘health in all policies’ .	As stated in relation to the similar national recommendation (recommendation number 9), the Fairer Scotland Duty (which puts an onus on particular public bodies to consider how they can reduce socioeconomic inequalities when making strategic decisions) came into force in April 2018. ‘Fairness Commissions’ have been established in a number of Scottish Local Authorities (Dundee, East Lothian, Edinburgh, Fife, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross, Renfrewshire, Shetland) alongside similar entities in England ^{165,166} . Related endeavours such as the Poverty Leadership Panel in Glasgow have also been set up ¹⁶⁷ .	Unclear: as with the identical recommendation aimed at national government (recommendation number 9 above), while the implementation of the Fairer Scotland duty represents some progress in itself, the impact is unclear, given the lack of any evaluation. Similarly, at this stage it is difficult to assess what the impact of the Fairness Commissions (and related bodies) might be, and no clear plans for evaluation have yet been identified ¹⁶⁸ .
24. Related to the above, an approach to local policy-making should be adopted which explicitly embraces previously identified actions to narrow inequalities at the local level ¹⁷ . The latter include: implementation of the living wage at a level and coverage recommended by the Living Wage Foundation (and in the case of Glasgow City	Nine separate policy proposals were put forward in the British Academy report mentioned in the recommendation. Some of these were very specific (e.g. implementation of the Real Living Wage; adopting 20mph speed limits) and some more broad (the importance of adult and further education, considering the cost effectiveness of different interventions) ^{xii} . There are some relevant updates to	Some progress within Glasgow. Further, quite extensive, research work would be required to assess progress within other local authority areas in Scotland.

^{xii} The nine policy suggestions were: 1) Implement a Real Living Wage; 2) Invest in early childhood interventions; 3) Implement 20mph speed limits instead of 30mph; 4) Take a ‘health first’ approach to tackling worklessness; 5) Use a form of participatory budgeting to make decisions on public health priorities and interventions; 6) Focus on further and adult education; 7) Improve the employment conditions of public sector workers; 8) Implement locally based ‘age-friendly environments’ that facilitate

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>Council in particular this should include the various ‘arm’s-length external organisations’ (ALEOS)); adoption of 20mph speed limits across the whole city (mentioned above); and taking a ‘health first’ approach to tackling worklessness.</p>	<p>some of the more specific recommendations. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glasgow’s Living Wage was actually introduced back in 2009. All employees of the city council – including all ALEOs – are now paid this version of the Real Living Wage. • As stated earlier, following the failure of an attempt to introduce national legislation, Glasgow City Council voted in January 2020 to have a 20mph speed limit in the majority of streets within the council area. • In terms of the recommendation around the use of participatory budgeting (PB) in local decision-making, four PB pilots were established by Glasgow City Council within socioeconomically deprived wards in 2018/19. An evaluation reported that the Council had “demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting inclusive and accessible PB” with pilot areas selected “with a clear objective of addressing 	

improvements in the independence, participation, health and wellbeing of older people; 9) Make good use of evidence of cost effectiveness before choosing between competing interventions to reduce health inequalities.

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
	<p>inequalities through the PB process”. It is hoped that the pilots will lead to a city-wide PB strategy, with the report judging that the Council “has a strong and clear vision for inclusive, accessible and inequalities-focused PB”¹⁶⁹. However, it should be noted that an evaluation of PB activities in other local authority areas in Scotland was published in 2019, with rather more mixed findings ¹⁷⁰.</p>	
<p>25. In the case of Glasgow City and the other local authorities within the Glasgow and Clyde Valley region^{xiii}, consideration should be given as to how to maximise the potential of City Deals¹⁷¹ investment to help mitigate against the effects of vulnerability in the population (e.g. through capital investment in social housing or the creation of sustainable high quality employment).</p>	<p>Although some of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley region ‘City Deal’ money has been (and is still being) spent on projects with associated public health benefits such as segregated cycle lanes and flood risk management, from evidence to date¹⁷² it seems unlikely that much, if any, of the funds have gone on helping to “mitigate against the effects of vulnerability in the population”. More generally, a recent Audit Scotland report has suggested it may be difficult to evaluate the benefits of any of the city deals that have been implemented in Scotland⁶⁵.</p>	<p>No progress.</p>

^{xiii} As defined by the UK government’s ‘City Deal’ report, these are: East Dunbartonshire; East Renfrewshire; Glasgow City; Inverclyde; North Lanarkshire; Renfrewshire; South Lanarkshire; and West Dunbartonshire.

Table 4. Understanding deprivation (recommendation 26)

The report stated: *Finally, there are a number of aspects of the excess mortality phenomena that we do not understand sufficiently, and there are, therefore, a number of research priorities which flow from this work. A full list of such priorities is listed in the next section of the report. However, one in particular is highlighted here, given its particular importance to the explanatory models presented in the report and its links to the issue vulnerability discussed above:*

Recommendation	Relevant policy developments	Assessment of progress
<p>26. There is an urgent need to prioritise further research on the true nature of deprivation in Scotland that is not captured by existing data and measurements. The evidence included within this report strongly suggests that the ‘lived reality’ of living in socially and materially deprived circumstances in Scotland differs from elsewhere in Britain, and it is imperative that new research, perhaps based on ethnographic methodologies and involving a comparative approach, is undertaken to better understand those differences, and to formulate appropriate policy responses.</p>	<p>New research into this issue is now underway, led by GCPH and Public Health Scotland.</p>	<p>Research is progressing.</p>

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