



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

**Social Justice and Social Security Committee**

Kaukab Stewart MSP,  
Minister for Equalities,  
Scottish Government

Social Justice and Social Security Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Via email only

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02 February 2026

Dear Minister,

**Update regarding inquiry into Financial Considerations When Leaving an Abusive Relationship**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee regarding its recent inquiry into Financial Considerations When Leaving an Abusive Relationship.

The report the Committee produced following this, detailed recommendations related to the Scottish Government's Equally Safe strategy, advice and information for victim/survivors, public bodies and debt, and legal aid, amongst other issues.

The Deputy Convener's contributions to the debate on the inquiry, delivered on behalf of the Committee, went into detail about some of these aspects, and we thank the Minister for responses provided during the debate, and in writing, in response to the Committee's report.

However, given that we are now drawing to the end of the parliamentary session, the Committee are interested in receiving a further update from the Scottish Government on progress made in implementing our recommendations.

As you know, our scrutiny found there was widespread support for the Fund to Leave, and we therefore welcome the Scottish Government's investment in a new national Fund to Leave for 2025/26, and that it is committed to making this

permanent. We are specifically interested in how implementation of this Fund is progressing and any updates on plans to make it permanent.

The Deputy Convener also highlighted during the debate that we want to see a consistent and trauma-informed approach taken by local authorities when pursuing debt from victim/survivors of economic abuse, and we ask that the Scottish Government and COSLA work together to make this happen.

We were clear that fear of repayment of council tax debt, or rent arrears, should not prevent someone from leaving an abusive relationship.

The Committee also heard from stakeholders that improvements could be made to the Scottish Government's Equally Safe strategy, that further recognise the impacts of economic abuse. Financially Included recommended to us that these could include specific action on issues related to public sector debt, housing costs and legal expenses.

In addition to this, stakeholders told us that information available to victim/survivors needs to be improved, and Glasgow Violence against Women Partnership told us that "a woman will contact up to 11 services before she gets the information she needs".

Our report also contained an extensive section on legal aid, which was of central concern to the women from Scottish Women's Aid's Survivor Reference Group, whom we engaged with as part of the inquiry. Our report asked the Scottish Government to work with the Legal Aid Board on issues including eligibility and legal fees.

It would be appreciated if you would please provide an update on these issues. Please find a link to the full report, including all conclusions and recommendations, here: [Inquiry Into Financial Considerations When Leaving an Abusive Relationship](#).

Could you please respond by **Tuesday, 10 February**.

Yours sincerely,



**Collette Stevenson MSP**  
**Convener**  
**Social Justice and Social Security Committee**