

Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Note by the Clerk

1st Meeting, (Session 6), 13 January 2022

At its meeting on 23 December the Committee received evidence from Sara Cowan, Coordinator at Scottish Women's Budget Group. During this session it was agreed various points would be provided in writing to the Committee.

The follow up information provided by Scottish Women's Budget Group can be found at **Annexe A**.

Following the Third Sector Recovery session held on 9 December the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) provided the Committee with follow up information.

As some of this relates to their views on the 2022-23 Scottish Budget we have provided the correspondence at **Annexe B**.

Clerk to the Committee
January 2022

Annexe A

Follow up information from Scottish Women's Budget Group

In relation to the point about £5m in the budget not being sufficient, to provide data on unmet need of unpaid carers

There is not one source of data on unmet need of unpaid carers but there is, what we believe demonstrates, a clear unmet need through information compiled

- Carers Trust Scotland finds in a survey that ran up until May 2021 82% of respondents had no access to respite or caring breaks ([covid-19-in-scotland.pdf \(carers.org\)](#));
- Research by the Family Fund Scotland shows that 73% of children and young people caring for a parent have been unable to access respite ([Download.ashx \(familyfund.org.uk\)](#));
- While the pandemic will have impacted on this recent figure further information from Carers Scotland shows that in 2018 18% of unpaid carers had a break from caring and that this respite was often provided once situations reached crisis intervention rather than as a pre-planned option and in 2019 less than a third of carers said their need for a break was sufficiently considered as part of their Adult Carer Support Plan (Carers Scotland, State of Caring 2018 and State of Caring 2019);
- Carers Scotland found that one in eight carers needed services they used to rely on to return or they faced the risk of reducing or giving up work, earlier research by Carers UK had found that 55% of carers who relied on day services were experiencing a reduction in support or no access at all ([Employers more supportive of caring, but carers still at risk of leaving work unless more measures adopted - Carers UK](#));
- While not all carers will need or want to access respite further information from Carers Scotland shows that 69% of carers surveyed said they were worried about continuing care without a break (<https://www.carersuk.org/scotland/news/worn-out-unpaid-carers-in-scotland-uncertain-the-services-they-rely-on-will-continue-post-pandemic>).

Data on the suspension of local authority care services during Covid and the reintroduction of those care services

There has not been a comprehensive assessment across Scotland of this data, it would be a very useful piece of analysis to help inform budgeting decisions and to understand if (and how much) additional funding is needed to local authorities to support the reintroduction of services and return to at least pre-pandemic levels.

The Health and Social Care Alliance has recommended that all local authorities/HSCPs publish information outlining whether partial assessments undertaken during the emergency period have been reviews (and adjusted

accordingly), and whether social care packages, non-emergency respite care and residential care have returned to pre-pandemic levels ([Briefing November 2021 draft 4 \(alliance-scotland.org.uk\)](https://alliance-scotland.org.uk)). This information would allow for a more comprehensive analysis.

Once again we can compile an out look through research conducted by a variety of third sector organisations.

- Inclusion Scotland highlighted that 30% of their survey respondents social care had been completely stopped or reduced, sometimes at very short notice (<https://inclusionScotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Rights-At-Risk-Main-Report.pdf>);
- The Glasgow Disability Alliance found in 2020 that 2000 disabled people in Glasgow had their care reduced or completely stopped (<file:///C:/Users/SaraCowan/Downloads/GDA%E2%80%93Supercharged-Covid-19Report.pdf>);
- Media reports of care cutbacks demonstrate this is an ongoing challenge during the pandemic with Glasgow reportedly cutting back day services due to staffing challenges in care homes (<https://www.scotsman.com/health/covid-scotland-glasgow-social-care-cut-back-amid-staffing-pressure-on-care-homes-3394590>)



Supporting Scotland's
Vibrant voluntary sector

Convener of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee

Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

21/12/2021

Dear Convener

Additional evidence on the resilience and recovery of Scotland's voluntary sector

Thank you for inviting SCVO to give written and oral evidence to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee on the resilience and recovery of Scotland's voluntary sector. Following our evidence, I wish to offer further consideration of the questions raised.

Scottish Budget and the third sector budget line

The committee asked about the third sector budget line within the Scottish budget, including its utilisation and whether this is sufficient. The committee also asked panellists what they would like to see in the Scottish budget for 2022-23. During my evidence, I pointed to the importance of the voluntary sector's infrastructure; this includes investment in organisations and investment in the commitments and priorities set out by the Scottish Government.

Following the committee session, the Scottish Government announced that the fiscal resource line of the third sector budget is to be reduced by £800,000. This may seem like a small amount of money, but any cut will inevitably result in weakened support for voluntary organisations, and their volunteers, across Scotland, at a time of great uncertainty. This decision is a worrying signal that, despite all that's been said about the importance of the voluntary sector during the pandemic, the government is not willing to translate that into action.

SCVO and fellow intermediary bodies are committed to supporting the Scottish Government's ambition of a fair recovery through the government's own priorities, including the Social Enterprise Action Plan, Volunteering Action Plan, and the Strengthening Collaboration initiative (see page 2 of this letter). If this cut goes ahead, it will have serious implications for delivering commitments relating to these areas and more.

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This announcement was a severe blow following the committee's session on the resilience of the voluntary sector. SCVO would ask that the committee takes on board our concerns and consider what it can do to ensure that the Scottish Government rethinks this substantial reduction of investment in the foundations that support the sector. SCVO has [written](#) to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government to outline our concerns.

Partnership working

During my evidence, I expressed disappointment that we have not seen more progress on the former [Equalities and Human Rights Committee's](#) recommendation to foster partnership across the voluntary sector within the current competitive funding environment. The committee called on *'the Scottish Government to work with other statutory funders to consider how partnership working can be encouraged in a competitive funding environment'* and *'set out how it is doing this currently, and its plans for future improvement.'*

While this point on progress is accurate, the committee may have been asking about the progress made to foster partnership working between the voluntary and public sectors. In this regard, the Scottish Government has entered a strategic partnership – [Strengthening Collaboration](#) – with SCVO, the TSI Network and COSLA to take work forward in this area. Coming together during the pandemic has added challenges to this work. All partners would share the view that progress in moving from the theory of a partnership agreement to practical change has been much slower than we would have hoped or anticipated.

We do not yet know the direct impact of the cut to the third sector fiscal resource line in the Scottish budget. However, it seems likely that this will have a significant effect on what, if any, resources are available to take forward this work, leaving further uncertainty around what impact it might have on the sector.

Economic recovery

During the meeting, the committee asked how to ensure that the third sector is at the heart of social and economic recovery? SCVO's [submission](#) to inform Scotland's 10-year economic transformation strategy offers a detailed account of our views on this issue, which I will briefly cover here.

The submission calls on the Scottish Government to close the gap between the welcome acknowledgement of the voluntary sector's contribution to the Scottish economy and the less welcome reality of how voluntary organisations are involved in shaping and delivering Scotland's economic policy.

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That gap is evident in work to develop Scotland's economic strategy. While we wait with interest for the outcome of the national economic transformation work, the voluntary sector's absence from the group, and other critical economic initiatives, is harmful to the resilience of the sector, the economy, and our society.

In 2020, SCVO and Social Enterprise Scotland worked with MSPs to support a successful amendment to the Scottish National Investment Bank Bill, now an Act of Parliament. This articulated that the bank would be able to lend to voluntary organisations. The reality is that we have seen no engagement on how the bank might do that in practice. It is one example of Scotland's economic policy not considering how the sector might have a different role to play.

The sector employs over 100,000 staff based on SCVO's definition of a voluntary organisation. This workforce is the same size as the digital and tech industry in Scotland and larger than the financial services sector in Scotland. The voluntary sector also had an annual turnover of more than £6bn in 2019 and works with over 1m volunteers. It enables other people to remain economically active through its care and services.

If the Scottish Government is to unleash the transformative potential of Scotland's voluntary sector, economic policy must recognise and invest in the voluntary sector as a significant employer, partner, vital economic actor, and an agent for change in Scotland's recovery from the pandemic, alongside the public and private sectors.

The Scottish Government needs to progress on the many social and economic recommendations that exist, particularly those where the voluntary sector's knowledge, skills and expertise have been considered, such as those made by the [Social Renewal Advisory Board](#). We also need to address the disconnect between policy and practice concerning the sector's involvement.

The committee could play a key role across all its areas to ensure that the voluntary sector is involved in key economic and social strategies, and that partnerships with the sector agreed at the policy level are implemented on the ground and in delivery. At the same time, it could also emphasise the importance of the public sector funding voluntary organisations for longer and avoiding making voluntary organisations jump through the many hoops to secure funding, which is key to the sector being viewed as a partner alongside the public and private sectors.

Breakdown of fund recipients

The committee asked about the make-up of recipients of emergency funding in terms of size of organisations. The breakdown of recipients of Covid related funds managed through SCVO's shared funding platform can be found on 360 Giving. The committee can access a breakdown of awards within each fund, including by organisation size (based on income). The committee can also see which organisations

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received funding by downloading the data generated by 360Insights. For ease, we have inserted the relevant graphs for three of the main funds that show the number of grants awards against the latest annual income bands that recipients fall within.

Scottish Government Third Sector Resilience Fund – [view full breakdown](#)



Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund – [view full breakdown](#)



Scottish Government Adapt and Thrive Fund – [view full breakdown](#)



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SCVO has encouraged other grant makers to upload their datasets to this platform to aid transparency and support future analysis. Some of this data can be found on the [SCVO website](#) or directly through the [360 Giving portal](#).

I want to thank the Social Justice and Social Security Committee for their continued interest in the vital role of Scotland's voluntary organisations in our society and the economy. My colleagues and I would be happy to discuss the issue of voluntary sector resilience and recovery further as and when the opportunity arises.

Kind Regards,

Paul Bradley

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