

Fair Work Action Plan

SCVO briefing to Scottish Parliament

12 March 2029

Our position

SCVO is supportive of the Scottish Government's commitment to Fair Work agenda and welcomes the Fair Work Action Plan. However SCVO believes that the current procurement and commissioning processes need to be urgently reviewed to ensure that the new plan can be effectively implemented.

As indicated last autumn by SCVO's Chief Executive Anna Fowlie: 'We welcome the First Minister's expanded commitment to Fair Work – it's essential that the Scottish Government uses all the drivers at their disposal to promote fair work. The third sector is strongly supportive of the fair work agenda and employers in the sector want to embrace fair work, but are often prevented by short-term, project-based funding models and cumbersome, task-focused procurement practices. SCVO has long advocated that organisations who want government support must offer proper contracts, end zero hours contracts, pay the living wage and tackle gender-based inequality to help Scotland create a more inclusive society in which everyone can share the benefits of an inclusive and sustainable economy. We hope the First Minister will make these commitments a reality in short order and also ensure that procurement processes, accreditation schemes and business pledges are only open to those who want to make a meaningful contribution to the fair work agenda and creating a more equal society.'

Fair Work in Scotland's Social Care Sector 2019 Report

SCVO notes the Scottish Government's commitment in the plan to consider and respond to the recent report from the Fair Work Convention on Scotland social care sector. Scotland's third sector employs 28% of Scotland's social care workforce and we would welcome initial remarks from the government on the report.

SCVO agrees with the recommendation asking for a radical overhaul of procurement and commissioning practices. We are of the view that this is crucial in order to deliver fair work and ensure the sustainability of the social care sector. Urgent reform of procurement and commissioning services is needed to ensure that people receive the best care possible across Scotland.

We recommend that the current approach to commissioning and procuring care services be regarded as a failed experiment (David Behan, Care Quality Commission) and abandoned in favour of a completely new approach, developed collaboratively with the people using the services and frontline workers. SCVO would also seek greater transparency from commissioners and regulators on how they scrutinise fair work practices.

SCVO is also of the view that better monitoring and enforcement of employers' codes of practice is essential to ensure that fair work practice becomes a reality for the sector.

As the Fair Work Commission's report rightly emphasises 'Scotland faces a choice; whether to invest in people and their experience of fair work, or continue investing in, while mitigating the impacts of, a profoundly broken commissioning and procurement system.'

About us

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) is the national body representing the third sector. There are over 45,000 voluntary organisations in Scotland involving around 138,000 paid staff and approximately 1.3 million volunteers. The sector manages an income of £5.3 billion.

SCVO works in partnership with the third sector in Scotland to advance our shared values and interests. We have over 2,000 members who range from individuals and grassroots groups, to Scotland-wide organisations and intermediary bodies.

As the only inclusive representative umbrella organisation for the sector SCVO:

- has the largest Scotland-wide membership from the sector – our 1,900 members include charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations of all shapes and sizes
- our governance and membership structures are democratic and accountable - with an elected board and policy committee from the sector, we are managed by the sector, for the sector

- brings together organisations and networks connecting across the whole of Scotland
- SCVO works to support people to take voluntary action to help themselves and others, and to bring about social change.
- Further details about SCVO can be found at www.scvo.org.uk.

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