



SCOTTISH PENSIONERS' FORUM: SCOTTISH ELECTION MANIFESTO 2026

The Scottish Pensioners' Forum is made up of older people from across Scotland. We are pensioners, carers, workers and volunteers who have spent decades building, sustaining, and strengthening the country that we live in. We have contributed economically and held together the communities that Scotland depends on today. Yet all too often, we are overlooked, our voices sidelined, and our basic needs treated as inconvenient or as an afterthought.

Since the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary elections, many of us have lived through some of the most challenging years in recent history. The COVID pandemic hit older people hardest, not only in terms of our health, but through fear, isolation and profound loss. Many of us were cut off from our loved ones, support networks, and essential services. Thousands died, too often without the dignity and care they so richly deserved. Those years must never be forgotten and the lessons learnt from it must never be ignored.

Over the past few years, pressure on older people has not eased but has in many ways intensified. The cost-of-living crisis has placed an unacceptable strain on older people. Energy bills have soared and too many of us have been forced into the impossible choice between heating and eating. Any support offered to us has often been slow, confusing, or totally insufficient.

At the same time, our NHS is under consistent strain. Older people face long waits for GP appointments, delays in treatment, and growing difficulty accessing local services. Social care is stretched to breaking point, with staff shortages, inconsistent provision, and charging policies that leave many of us paying simply to live with some semblance of dignity.

Demands for social care reform have been repeatedly promised over the past five years but have as yet to come to fruition, either that or have been abandoned completely. Add to this the issues with the end of life and palliative care framework and it is no small wonder that older people are feeling isolated, invisible and forlorn.

As well as this, the world we know is changing rapidly, and not always in ways that look to include us. Services are moving online while many older people are left without the access, skills, or confidence to partake in this supposed technological advancement. Public transport is being reduced or withdrawn, community hubs are closing, and opportunities to stay connected in a way that suits us are becoming few and far between.

Loneliness is rising, and inequality is deepening especially for those older people already facing disadvantage, including women, disabled people, minority ethnic communities, those identifying as LGBTQ+, carers, and those in rural or socially deprived areas.

Yes, Scotland's population is ageing but this is a predictable and manageable change that should have been adequately planned for. Instead, providing for older people as they age is spoken about as being 'too costly' rather than recognising our worth as individuals with rights, experience, and value.

Later life should be a time of security, dignity, and continued contribution. Older people are not separate from Scotland's future but are absolutely central to it. We continue to work, care, volunteer, and support those around us: we still have so much to give of both our time and our experience.

This manifesto clearly sets out what older people across Scotland are demanding from those who seek to represent us. Not vague commitments or distant promises, but real, measurable action, action which reflects our lived experiences and our clear expectations for change.

**Older people know what needs to change and we know what a fairer Scotland should look like
Let us work together so that all generations can benefit.**

Pensions and Welfare

We ask the Scottish Government to lobby Westminster to:

- Make an immediate increase to the Basic State Pension
- Ensure the triple lock system remains the measure on which pensions increases are based.
- To ensure that all pensioners receive the same level of state pension and that no existing pensioners are penalised under the recent changes to the pension system.
- To abolish means testing and to provide ALL pensioners with a living pension above the UK's own official poverty level.
- To award pensions justice for women pensioners and to support the WASPI campaign
- To ensure ease of access to the application process for age related benefits and entitlements with a range of application options being made available.
- Prevent any further closures of defined benefit schemes.
- To protect public sector pension schemes.



We call on the Scottish Government themselves to:

- Make an immediate increase to the winter fuel allowance in order to eradicate fuel poverty
- Provide affordable energy through social tariffs

Health and Social Care That Works for Older People

- Faster access to GPs and local health services
- An end to long waiting lists and confusing systems
- More face-to-face appointments
- Equal access to care, wherever we live
- A person-centred approach to care which focuses on improving our quality of life, which is sensitive to our individual needs, and which is not delivered on a standardised basis.
- Involvement in decisions about our own health and wellbeing
- Help and support to live independently for longer
- Proper support in end of life and palliative care situations
- Recognition and financial support for unpaid carers
- Proper training and remuneration for social care staff
- More value given to both paid and unpaid caring roles
- Defend the NHS as a publicly funded service
- Introduce a publicly funded, owned and administered National Care Service
- Safeguard essential public services
- No barriers to accessing healthy and nutritious food for older people.
- Prioritise actions to tackle social isolation and loneliness at both community and national level



Travel and Transport

- A properly designed and adequately funded public transport system.
- The Concessionary Travel Scheme to be extended, and made valid, throughout Scotland and to include rail and ferry travel
- Additional funding designed to improve accessibility to transport for older and disabled people and their carers

Community and Connection

- Make social connection a public health priority
- National and local action to reduce loneliness and isolation
- Improvements in learning and support to end digital exclusion for older people
- Improve accessibility to digital services in public buildings and for organisations working closely with older people
- Education and training on avoiding scams and exploitation
- Protect and fund community spaces
- Support for older people to stay active and involved
- Ensure that non digital options are always made available



Participation

- An end to the undermining of communities with the introduction of more community empowerment initiatives that place a duty on statutory authorities to comply
- Recognise that older people have the right to participate in bodies, which deal with their concerns at all levels of governance, and to have their views taken into account
- Respect for an individual's preferences, routines, customs, faith, cultural differences, disability, sexual orientation, and all other needs appertaining to their sense of self



Housing: Homes that Meet People's Needs

- The building of accessible social housing to meet the needs of older people as they age
- Schemes to help with quick, affordable home adaptations for older people
- Secure rights for older renters

Ending Ageism and Discrimination

- Challenge ageism in services and society
- Tackle abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Ensure a firm recognition of older people's continued contribution to society
- Tackle inequalities faced by older people



Environment/Energy

- Encouraging the proper recycling of waste, bearing in mind the accessibility problems often associated with older people
- That the Scottish Government resolves to work with others in mitigating climate change and to support those who seek to prevent further damage to our planet.

Scotland's Block Grant from Westminster

- The maintenance of the current agreement under the Barnett formula
- Defend the NHS and protect its current publicly funded model
- Prevent public service cuts and provide more help for carers



SCOTTISH PENSIONERS FORUM CAMPAIGNING NOW TO SECURE YOUR FUTURE

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