

SHA Scotland

Motion: Scottish Labour Party Conference – February 2025

Health inequalities

This conference notes with concern that life expectancy in Scotland is no longer rising. While deaths relating to COVID-19 play a part in explaining recent falls, the deviation from the long-run trend dates back to the early 2010s. More people in Scotland are in relative poverty, more are likely to be inactive due to long-term illnesses, and food insecurity, homelessness, and fuel poverty are all higher than they were. The recent SHERU report found that key outcomes related to health and inequalities are not significantly improving and are, in some cases, worsening.

The conference recognises that health inequalities underpin most of the challenges facing our health and care systems, damage the life chances of young people, and weaken the economy. There is limited evidence that current policies have effectively reduced inequalities.

Conference, therefore, calls on the Scottish Policy Forum to put radical action on health inequalities at the heart of Scottish Labour's programme. This means a relentless focus on preventative spending, which includes reallocating resources to the communities in greatest need, investing in the services that determine our health, like housing, benefits, and social care, as well as reducing poverty for all groups. We must also reduce health risks at work and home, take control of our food system, and put local communities in charge of making the decisions that shape their lives.

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(223 words)