

Scottish Labour Party Conference – March 2022

Motion – Socialist Health Association Scotland

Local action on health inequalities

This conference notes with concern that improvements in average life expectancy in Scotland have stalled in recent years, and the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas has increased. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these inequalities because the harms were not spread evenly across society.

Conference recognises that no serious plan to tackle health inequalities in Scotland can ignore the pivotal role of local government. They make a vital contribution to weaving the social fabric of their areas and seeking to create and sustain healthy places for people to be born, grow, live, work and age.

Conference, therefore, condemns cuts to council funding that hugely impact local services and the health of our communities. Local Government's revenue funding has reduced by 2.4% in real terms between 2013/14 and 2021/22, in contrast to a 3.1% increase in Scottish Government revenue funding over the same period. Fair funding for local government is crucial to tackling health inequalities.

This conference calls on the SEC to make fair funding for local council services a key element of the local government election campaign. It also calls on Labour council groups to develop a community health strategy that shows how the council will make positive interventions through the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general wellbeing of their communities and citizens.

(223 Words)