

## Scottish Labour Party Conference – March 2019

### Health inequalities

This conference notes with concern reports from the Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO), which shows that life expectancy gains since 2012 have slowed, and in Scotland's most deprived communities the death rate has actually risen by one percent. Among the UK countries Scotland has the lowest life expectancy, with a life expectancy two years lower for women, and 2.5 years lower for men than in England. Dr Gerry McCartney of ScotPHO highlighted the impact of austerity on life expectancy when he said: "The strongest candidates [for tackling this problem] are policies that address recent economic setbacks which have reduced spending on benefits, squeezed incomes and trapped people in poverty".

The Royal College of General Practitioners warns that health inequalities in Scotland are the poor relations to the health concerns of the wealthy and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation said these findings show that tackling poverty and health inequalities in Scotland is unravelling. It cannot be right that someone's life expectancy is held back by where they live or how much money their family has.

There is a growing class mortality gap. We are being asked to work longer and retire later and poorer and many are facing shorter and less healthy lives as pensioners.

Conference, therefore, calls on the Scottish Policy Forum to put radical action on health inequalities at the heart of Scottish Labour's programme. This includes growing the budgets that determine our health like housing, benefits and social care, as well as reducing poverty for all groups.

(248 words)

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