

## AIDE MEMOIRE FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS – CATHOLIC MATTERS – MAY 2021

26<sup>TH</sup> April 2021

Information prepared by the CPO (Catholic Parliamentary Office) for the Bishops Conference of Scotland about the stance of the various political parties in Scotland preparing for the May 6<sup>th</sup> Scottish Elections on some of the crucial questions of importance to the Catholic Church in this election.

This table contains a sample of issues of significance for the forthcoming Scottish election and the positions of political parties in relation to those issues. Where party manifestos and policies are available online, we have used those resources to populate the table to show each party’s position. This information may be of assistance, especially in relation to regional votes, where voters express preference for a party.

	<b>Abortion</b>	<b>Assisted Suicide</b>	<b>Child Poverty</b>	<b>Gender Law Reform</b>
<b>Scottish Family Party</b>	We affirm the value of human life in the womb. Abortion as a means of birth control is morally unjustifiable. Ultimately, we would like to see the law reflect this.	We oppose the introduction of assisted suicide and euthanasia.	Promotion of ‘family stability’ as a policy avenue to be explored in the fight against poverty.	We oppose the proposed Gender Recognition Act. Officially changing sex/gender should not be possible merely at the request of an individual. Teaching children that they can choose their gender is extremely harmful. Steering children and young people towards puberty-blocking drugs and sex reassignment surgery is grossly irresponsible, given that a clear majority of children will naturally outgrow gender confusion.
<b>Scottish Greens</b>	Decriminalise abortion, remove the ‘two doctor rule’, and retain the provision for early medical abortions at home introduced during the pandemic.	Introduce safe and compassionate laws that allow terminally ill adults the right to an assisted death when the time is right for them.	Provision of school meals all year round. Committed to meeting the legal 2030 target of reducing Relative Child Poverty to 10%. Double Scottish Child Payment to £20 per week.	Deliver long overdue reforms to the Gender Recognition Act, including statutory self-declaration, recognising non-binary identities and all genders, and providing access to health care for trans minors with parental or guardian consent.

	<b>Abortion</b>	<b>Assisted Suicide</b>	<b>Child Poverty</b>	<b>Gender Law Reform</b>
<b>SNP</b>	<p>Abortion is a legal right in Scotland and we will protect that right. We have no plans to restrict existing abortion legislation. We are clear that those accessing abortion services should not be targeted for choosing to access this right. We will support any local authority who wishes to use their powers to establish bye-laws to create protest-free buffer zones outside clinics that provide abortion services.</p>	<p>The SNP government recently established a Citizens' Assembly to 'help find consensus on issues where people have sharply divided opinions'. The party's election manifesto for 2021 commits to further discussion on assisted dying under the auspices of the Citizens' Assembly.</p>	<p>Double Scottish Child Payment to £20 per week. Provision of school breakfasts and lunches for all state primary school pupils, all year round.</p>	<p>In the next parliament we will work with trans people, women, equality groups, legal and human rights experts to identify the best and most effective way to improve and simplify the process by which a trans person can obtain legal recognition, so that the trauma associated with that process is reduced. We remain committed to making necessary changes to the Gender Recognition Act that arise from this work at the earliest opportunity.</p>
	<b>Abortion</b>	<b>Assisted Suicide</b>	<b>Child Poverty</b>	<b>Gender Law Reform</b>
<b>Scottish Liberal Democrats</b>	<p>We will remove criminal sanctions for receiving an abortion, and for appropriately regulated medical professionals providing them. We will provide funding so that users of reproductive healthcare services are provided with enough specialist advice to make fully informed decisions. We will legally enforce safe zones around abortion service providers so that those visiting can travel to them free of any harassment or pressure on their decision.</p>	<p><i>No information.</i></p>	<p>We will double the Scottish Child Payment and support other measures, such as free school meals, as part of a programme to end child poverty, with the intention to meet the targets unanimously agreed by Parliament. We will continue to call on the UK Government to make permanent the £20 uplift in Universal Credit introduced during the pandemic to address child poverty.</p>	<p>Improve laws on gender recognition in line with international best practice to allow trans people to change the legal gender on their birth certificate with a simple process based on the principle of self-determination, and without intrusive medical diagnosis requirements, and include the recognition of non-binary people. This de-medicalised system to change legal gender will better support trans people to live their lives free from discrimination.</p>

<b>Scottish Conservatives</b>	<b>Abortion</b>	<b>Assisted Suicide</b>	<b>Child Poverty</b>	<b>Gender Law Reform</b>
	<i>No information.</i>	<i>No information.</i>	Focus on creating jobs. Over a third of children in poverty live in workless households. Deliver free school lunches and breakfasts for all children in primary school. Complete the rollout of the Scottish Child Payment and increase payments to £20 per week by the end of the Parliament.	<i>No information.</i>
<b>Restore Scotland</b>	<b>Abortion</b>	<b>Assisted Suicide</b>	<b>Child Poverty</b>	<b>Gender Law Reform</b>
	'The sanctity of human life' is listed as a tenet/objective of the party in its constitution.	'The sanctity of human life' is listed as a tenet/objective of the party in its constitution.	<i>No information.</i>	<i>No information.</i>
<b>ALBA</b>	<b>Abortion</b>	<b>Assisted Suicide</b>	<b>Child Poverty</b>	<b>Gender Law Reform</b>
	<i>No information.</i>	<i>No information.</i>	Introduce a £500 Annual payment to every low-income household in Scotland to tackle deprivation and, in particular, to help them with big costs that are otherwise unaffordable on low pay or benefits. Provide free school breakfasts and lunches for all early years, primary and secondary school pupils.	ALBA is calling for a Citizens' Assembly to be established with urgency to develop binding proposals on reform of the Gender Recognition Act.

	Abortion	Assisted Suicide	Child Poverty	Gender Law Reform
Scottish Labour	Scottish Labour will protect the right of women to have access to a safe, legal abortion and we will designate buffer zones around clinics to protect the privacy of women.	<i>No information.</i>	We support measures to increase the Scottish Child Payment to £20 a week by the end of 2022 to lift more children out of poverty. To further address child poverty, we will extend the current provision of free school meals as well as rolling this out all year, ending the scandal of children going hungry during the school holidays.	We will reform the Gender Recognition Act to demedicalise the process and allow for the recognition of people who identify as neither men nor women. Scottish Labour shares concerns that some parents of children with intersex traits, also known as variations in sex characteristics, are still pressured into unnecessary surgeries. While some may choose to take medical steps later in life, this is a choice that must be made by individuals themselves.

Please note that there are other policy areas you may want to explore. The issues highlighted are not an exhaustive list of issues of importance for Catholics. To explore further, please click the relevant party name in the [‘manifestos/policies’ section of the CPO election resource](#) to access manifestos and/or other policy information.

Where ‘*no information*’ is stated, this means that we were unable to find a policy position either in the party’s 2021 manifesto or on the party website.

**Please note:**

\*Parties are listed in order of manifesto release date.

\*Some issues, like child poverty, are complex and there are a variety of policies which could impact a party’s approach to tackling that particular issue. The table details the most direct policies which aim to tackle child poverty.