

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AND THE STUC:

## SHARED AIMS

1. The Scottish Government and the Scottish Trades Union Congress share a commitment to partnership working on strategic issues and in areas of common interest. The Scottish Government and the STUC have jointly produced this memorandum of understanding to reflect and underpin this commitment.
2. This document is based on a mutual understanding of the distinctive values and roles of each party and provides a framework for developing genuine partnership. It recognises, however, that from time to time some differences will inevitably arise. In such circumstances, each side will treat with respect the differing views expressed.
3. Making progress in all these areas will require the Scottish Government and the STUC to work together efficiently and effectively. Our core objective is the establishment of clearly defined processes and procedures for engaging with each other across a wide range of public policy issues.
4. We aim to make Scotland a vibrant economy, stable and innovative, to deliver a high standard of living to all her citizens.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5. We both recognise and respect each other's roles and functions, which are distinct but complementary:
  - The Scottish Government is responsible for developing and implementing public policy on devolved matters, for bringing appropriate legislation before the Scottish Parliament as necessary, and for the discharge of the functions assigned to Scottish Ministers by legislation.
  - The STUC is Scotland's Trade Union Centre. Its purpose is to co-ordinate, develop and articulate the views and policies of the Trade Union movement in Scotland, reflecting the aspirations of trade unionists as workers and citizens.

## BENEFITS

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6. It is expected that the document, and the positive working relationship it will help to foster, will bring significant benefits for both the Scottish Government and the STUC by:
  - Increasing understanding of how the Scottish Government and the STUC work, and their policy priorities;
  - Achieving a consistency of approach across the Scottish Government with regard to relationships with the STUC and the trade unions;
  - Extending opportunities for the STUC to contribute their experience and ideas to the development and implementation of public policy;
  - Facilitating the Scottish Government's access to the views of trade union members and wider networks;
  - Informing the processes that develop the policies and practices of all the Scottish Government's departments and its agencies, of the aspirations and needs of Scotland's trade unionists;
  - Working in partnership in areas of mutual interest; and
  - Informing longer-term planning and strategic thinking.

## PARTNERSHIP VALUES

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7. Our relationship is based on:
  - Mutual respect and trust;
  - Openness and transparency in communications;
  - Commitment to being positive and constructive;
  - Commitment to work with and learn from others;
  - A continuing dialogue on policy and priorities;
  - Ensuring high quality outcomes; and
  - Making the best use of resources.

## SHARED PRIORITIES

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8. The Scottish Government and the STUC will work together towards the development of a more productive, cohesive and fairer Scotland.
9. The STUC's priorities, reflected throughout this document, include the promotion of diversity and equality, sustainable economic development, excellent public services, trades union membership and working with Civic Scotland.
10. The purpose of the Scottish Government is to focus Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.
11. Scotland's Economic Strategy focuses on two main pillars to achieve that objective; increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality. It sets out the priorities we will target to achieve these mutually reinforcing goals: investment; innovation; inclusive growth and internationalisation.
12. Both parties believe that a more successful Scotland will provide opportunities for all its regions to flourish and for all its people to share in the benefits of increasing and sustainable economic growth.
13. Our shared priorities will be:
  - Maximise opportunities for jobs to give stability to households;
  - Solidarity, Cohesion and Sustainability within the context of economic growth; and
  - Social Partnership and Fair Work.

## COMMITMENT FROM THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

### 14. The STUC can expect:

- The Scottish Government to proactively contact the STUC when policy developments/changes directly impact on employment and/or terms and conditions of trade union members;
- The Scottish Government to acknowledge that trade unions are key social partners playing an important role in sustaining effective democracy in society, particularly at the workplace, and that the existence of good employment practices are a key contributor to economic competitiveness and social justice;
- The Scottish Government to support, as far as practicable, effective trade unionism, fair employment practice, and greater partnership between employers and trade unions;
- The Scottish Government to maintain a continuing dialogue with the STUC and, where appropriate, its individual affiliates, as a means of ensuring an effective trade union input to the development and implementation of the Scottish Government's policies and priorities;
- The Scottish Government to recognise the STUC as an important stakeholder and to seek the STUC's views during Consultation processes in accordance with the Government's Good Practice Guidance on Consultation. Where appropriate, the Government will continue to involve the STUC in ad hoc groups set up to review, develop or implement policy;
- The Scottish Government to endeavour to respond to requests for information and action points following a meeting with the STUC within the timescale set, or if none set, within a reasonable timeframe; and
- The Scottish Government to endeavour to respond to meeting requests within a reasonable timeframe.

## COMMITMENT FROM THE STUC

### 15 The Scottish Government can expect:

- The STUC to provide the Scottish Government with access to representative views, knowledge, expertise and experience of trade unionists as both workers and citizens, democratically determined through structures underpinned by equal opportunities principles;
- The STUC to add value to the development and implementation of Scottish Government policy by drawing on the unique range of expertise and experience its members represent;
- The STUC to help, through its structures, the Scottish Government, where appropriate, to communicate its policies and priorities to Scotland's trade unionists;
- The STUC to assist the Scottish Government to identify the trade unions with which it should be maintaining a dialogue on specific issues; and
- The STUC to endeavour to respond to consultation exercises, requests for information and action points following a meeting within the timescale set, or if none set, within a reasonable timeframe.

## PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS

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16. The Scottish Government will ensure that the process for public appointments will comply with the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland's Code of Practice.
17. The Scottish Government and the STUC are committed to making the process of public appointments as open and equitable as possible. We recognise that more needs to be done to widen the range of candidates if Government structures are to reflect the range of society. To help achieve this, the Scottish Government will provide the STUC, and other key representative bodies within Civic Scotland, with details of all vacancies on the date they are published on the Scottish Government website. The STUC will continue to work with Government in regularly reviewing progress on increasing diversity in public life.

## ENGAGEMENT

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18. The level of engagement between the Scottish Government and STUC will include:
  - The First Minister will meet the STUC twice a year for the purpose of exchanging views and information about policy issues. At these meetings, items may be placed on the agenda by either side.
  - Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers will meet with the STUC, as necessary, to discuss specific issues around their portfolios. In addition, either may request an ad hoc meeting on a specific subject at any time.
  - As well as Ministerial meetings, the Permanent Secretary and the STUC General Secretary will meet twice a year, and senior officials will meet senior members of the STUC General Council as appropriate; STUC and Scottish Government officials will meet as necessary to discuss specific policy issues.
  - Numbers and composition at meetings will be such as to contribute to meaningful discussion and debate on the issues outlined in the agenda which will lead to agreed outcomes. These meetings can be varied following agreement from both sides.

## DELIVERY AND MONITORING

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19. Scottish Government and STUC officials will meet regularly to review this Memorandum and the shared priorities. Officials may decide, from time to time, to carry out more formal reviews of the Memorandum and results of these exercises will be reported at the Bi-annual meetings between the First Minister and the STUC General Council.

LAWRENCE WASON  
STUC President

THE RT HON NICOLA STURGEON MSP  
The First Minister of Scotland

*May 2015*