

PRO-LIFE, PRO-GROWTH SUPPORT FOR MOTHERS AND BABIES

A briefing on SPUC's Five Asks of the Scottish Government

SEPTEMBER 2026

SPUC is calling on the Scottish Government to introduce a preventative family support package that protects unborn children and empowers vulnerable mothers. As part of our wider Five Asks of the Scottish Government, we also want to see greater investment in palliative care, the end of abortion “pills by post”, and the creation of a stand-alone offence making it a crime in Scotland to coerce a woman into having an abortion.

This briefing explains the Five Asks, and what you need to know to lobby your MSPs on these issues.

OUR FIVE ASKS

1. PRE-NATAL SCOTTISH CHILD PAYMENT

- **The Ask:** Extend the eligibility of the Scottish Child Payment¹ to pregnant mothers from the 24th week of pregnancy and introduce a targeted £500 cash grant for the least well-off mothers at the beginning of their final trimester.

2. END ABORTION COERCION IN SCOTLAND

No woman should ever be forced or pressured into having an abortion. Recent polling indicates that **15% of women surveyed felt coerced into having an abortion²**—representing nearly 3,000 women in Scotland last year alone.

- **The Ask:** Introduce explicit legislation making it a criminal offence to coerce a woman into undergoing an abortion and introduce mandatory screening for coercion.

3. END REMOTE ABORTION (TELEMEDICINE)

The “pills-by-post” framework removes essential clinical oversight, leaving women to manage abortion procedures at home without immediate medical supervision. This policy creates unnecessary complications and masks instances of domestic abuse or coercion.

- **The Ask:** Bring an immediate end to telemedicine (at-home) abortion provisions. Utilise Public Health Scotland data regarding hospital admissions and health complications resulting from remote medical abortions.

4. HALT ABORTION EXPANSION

Proposals emerging from the Scottish Abortion Law Review represent an extreme shift in healthcare policy.³ These include allowing full-term abortion if signed off by two doctors, introducing abortion on demand up to 24 weeks, and repealing *The Concealment of Birth (Scotland) Act*. Repealing this Act would legally allow the concealment of the bodies of babies delivered following at-home abortions.

- **The Ask:** Strongly reject these extreme recommendations. Keep these radical proposals front and centre of parliamentary scrutiny to ensure public safety and ethical standards are maintained.



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5. INVEST IN COMPREHENSIVE PALLIATIVE CARE

Following the clear public and parliamentary concerns surrounding assisted suicide proposals, the state must offer a truly compassionate response to terminal illness. True dignity in dying means ensuring no one feels like a burden due to inadequate care options.

- **The Ask:** Commit substantial new funding to Scotland's palliative and hospice care sectors. Expanding these services will suppress future attempts to introduce assisted suicide bills by addressing the root cause of end-of-life anxiety.

Why These Asks Align with Scottish Government Priorities

- **Eradicating Child Poverty Begins in the Womb:** Maternal health, nutrition, and financial stability during the final trimester directly impact a child's long-term physical and cognitive development.
- **Strengthening the Social Security Safety Net:** While the Best Start Grant⁴ provides excellent material support at birth, preparing for a child begins months earlier. A pre-natal payment bridges this critical gap, ensuring low-income families do not fall into high-cost debt before their baby arrives.
- **A Fairer, More Compassionate Scotland:** This policy supports the National Performance Framework's goals on health, equality, and children, ensuring every child receives the best possible start, regardless of socio-economic status.
- **Tackling Violence and Abuse, Healthcare Safeguards and Legal Clarity:** A specific criminal offence against coercion supports the Scottish Government goal to eradicate male violence and protect women from abusive control, mirroring frameworks like the *Equally Safe strategy*.⁵ Mandatory screening aligns with the Women's Health Plan⁶ by proactively identifying vulnerable patients experiencing domestic or reproductive control. Establishing statutory definitions fills a recognised gap in Scots law regarding reproductive coercion.
- **Data Utilisation:** Using Public Health Scotland metrics on hospital admissions and complications aligns with standard evidence-based policymaking.
- **Shifting care settings, reducing emergency strain, and joined-up services:** Enhancing community palliative resources helps people live and die at home or in local care settings, supporting the government's aim to ease severe bottlenecks and bed shortages in acute hospitals. Timely, proactive symptom management prevents late-stage, traumatic emergency hospital admissions for individuals with progressive or life-shortening conditions.

Talking points you can use when contacting/meeting MSPs

These measures align with national priorities to eradicate child poverty and strengthen our social security safety net. Research suggests that expanding pre-natal support is a cost-effective preventative spend that can improve long-term health outcomes and reduce future strain on the NHS.

- **"Tackling the Cost-of-Life Crisis":** Protecting families when the cost of welcoming new life is at an all-time high. The Scottish Child Payment being extended to pregnant mothers would ensure babies come into the world with the best possible start.
- **"No Woman Too Poor to Choose Motherhood":** Empowering women by removing financial barriers to parenting. We know women are more likely to have an abortion the more deprived they are so giving them financial support during pregnancy would better ensure they don't feel they need to have an abortion because of financial pressure.

- **Tackling Coercion:** Women should not be coerced by men into having an abortion. We know this happens. Explicit legislation would make protecting women from this form of violence a priority.
- **Investing in palliative care:** New Prime Minister Andy Burnham has said that we need to dedicate more resources to end of life care. We believe the Scottish Government should match that commitment.
- **Ending Pills by post:** In-person medical appointments are a vital safety net for vulnerable women. When a woman must physically visit a clinic, healthcare professionals can speak to her alone, spot signs of domestic abuse, and check if she is being forced into the decision.
- **The Telemedicine Flaw:** The “pills-by-post” system removes this face-to-face contact. It allows an abusive partner or family member, to control the phone call, complete the online consultation, and intercept the medication.
- **The Pitch:** By moving abortion out of the clinic and into the home, telemedicine has inadvertently stripped away the primary defence mechanism we had against domestic coercion. We cannot protect women we cannot see.

How to lobby your MSP

The most effective thing you can do is speak to your MSP in person. Personal engagement gives you the opportunity to explain why these issues matter to you and ask your MSP directly to support the Five Asks.

- **Find your MSPs.** As a Scottish resident, you have one constituency MSP and seven regional MSPs. Find their contact details through the Scottish Parliament website. Prioritise your constituency MSP for an in-person meeting.
- **Ask for a meeting.** Contact your MSP’s office and ask for a meeting at their constituency office or advice surgery. Fridays and parliamentary recesses are often good opportunities because MSPs spend more time in their constituencies. You can also request to meet MSPs at Holyrood.
- **Prepare your key points.** Decide which of the Five Asks you most want to raise. You do not need to be an expert. Your MSP needs to hear why these issues matter to you and your community. If possible, share a personal experience or explain why you believe the Scottish Government should act.
- **Ask for specific commitments.** Ask your MSP whether they will support each of the Five Asks and what action they will take.
- **Be polite, persistent and follow up.** Thank your MSP for their time. If they cannot give you an answer at the meeting, ask them to respond afterwards. Let SPUC know how your meeting went.

FIVE ASKS – FIVE ACTIONS

Ask your MSP to support:

- A Pre-Natal Scottish Child Payment.
- A specific criminal offence of abortion coercion and mandatory screening.
- An end to remote abortion/pills by post.
- A halt to further abortion expansion.
- Substantial additional investment in palliative and hospice care.

CONCLUSION

Every woman deserves genuine support, protection from coercion and access to compassionate healthcare—and every unborn child deserves protection. Scotland can strengthen families, safeguard vulnerable women, improve palliative care and resist further abortion expansion. Ask your MSP to support all five asks and to tell you what action they will take.

ENDNOTES

1. Scottish Child Payment is a payment to help low-income families with children under 16. Full information can be found at <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/scottish-child-payment>
2. <https://savanta.com/knowledge-centre/poll/reproductive-coercion-poll-bbc-radio-4-8-march-2022/>
3. More information can be found here: <https://spuc.org.uk/campaign/stop-abortion-decriminalisation-in-scotland/>
4. Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are payments that help towards the costs of being pregnant or looking after a child. Full information can be found here: <https://www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods>
5. <https://www.gov.scot/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls/equally-safe-strategy/>
6. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/womens-health-plan/>

SCAN QR CODE BELOW TO EMAIL YOUR MSPs, OR VISIT:
spuc.org.uk/campaign/5-asks-for-the-scottish-government



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