

Dear Candidate

We wish you all the very best in your campaign for a seat at the Scottish Parliament in 2021. The election comes just over a year after the start of the pandemic. I am certain that you will agree with me, that citizens of the City, social enterprises, community and voluntary organisations of Edinburgh, have been outstanding in their role at the heart of the response to COVID-19.

From looking out for their neighbour, to volunteering to get food to people in need, to making sure that older people in localities were not left isolated and alone – this is what drove the response that energised communities. From established local organisations to many local groups, the people who led this are visible in our wider research, [Mind the Craic](#) and the evidence from the [Edinburgh Poverty Commission](#).

There are vital themes (below) that we would like to hear your response to and more importantly share with our members and the wider sector. We would be delighted to receive your response by video or in writing so that we can share across our digital communications channels\*.

We would therefore like to draw your attention to key policy areas:

(1) **An Enhanced Role for the Community and Voluntary Sector**

EVOC has a strategic partnership with Volunteer Edinburgh and Edinburgh Social Enterprise Network and this makes up the 'TSI' in Edinburgh. In our [national manifesto](#) created with the 31 other TSI across Scotland we ask for an enhanced role for the third sector - community and voluntary organisations and implementation of place based approaches

(2) **A structural change in the further integration of Health and Social Care**

EVOC fully endorses the recommendations of the [Independent Review of Adult Social Care](#) including the formation of a National Care service.

(3) **An Accelerated Pace in Systems Change**

There is a clear and coherent need to empower communities further to mitigate the ongoing impact of the pandemic. However, this can only be achieved with the right support and resources: ['If not now, When', Social Renewal Advisory Board Report Jan 2021](#)

(4) **A National Plan for Universal Family Support**

We call for a transformation of Scotland's investment in children and families, shifting spending from dealing with the consequences of failure and inequality to preventing these and enabling children & families to thrive, and an emphasis on wellbeing: [Children in Scotland Family Support Campaign & Manifesto 2021](#)

Finally, in coming to EVOC I have deliberately wanted to take a listening approach, to understand better the state of the community and voluntary sector now. In particular I am focused on what it means to have a thriving local community and voluntary sector in the city - what are the conditions for communities to be resilient and more than that, to thrive – and have launched a [Thriving Local](#) campaign to support this.

I would be very interested in your response and to start a conversation on this and the four key policy areas identified above.

We look forward to hearing from you.

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\* We will share your responses through our social media channels, website and a range of e-communications.