

It will also focus on Gaelic education by placing a duty on councils to assess the need for Gaelic medium primary education following a parental request. As part of our ongoing support for Gaelic, we will ensure funding for Bòrd na Gàidhlig is protected.

We will also expand entitlement to the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) so that an extra 10,000 school pupils and 12,000 college students receive this important financial support, making it easier for them continue their education. This will bring the number of young Scots receiving the EMA to 57,000.

We are proud to have delivered our unique Scottish Youth Guarantee, with a guaranteed offer of a place in training or education for all 16 to 19 year olds. That is why we have seen an increase in full-time college places and have committed to an increase in the number of Modern Apprenticeship places to 30,000 each year. SNP MPs will press the UK to adopt the European Youth Guarantee to ensure faster intervention when a young person aged 16 to 24 is unemployed.

Passing power to people and delivering stronger communities.

Throughout the referendum campaign we said that decisions about Scotland's future should be taken by the people who care most about Scotland, that is the people who live here. That same broad principle should apply to decisions that most directly affect our local communities.

Over these coming months, we will ensure progress of the **Community Empowerment Bill**, which was introduced to the Parliament earlier this year. The Bill

Mitigating welfare changes

The Scottish Government has been working to reduce the negative impact on households of UK welfare changes. The UK Social Fund is now delivered by the Scottish Government and provides Crisis Grants and also Community Care Grants to enable independent living.

Following the abolition of Council Tax Benefit and the 10 percent reduction in funding made available for its replacement, the Scottish Government and Scotland's councils, working together, are providing £40 million to ensure that no household loses out as a result of the UK change. Over half a million households in Scotland have been protected from higher Council Tax bills.

We are also providing £35 million per year to ensure over 70,000 Scottish households can be protected from the damaging effects of the Westminster Bedroom Tax.

proposes ways we can improve civic and community engagement and empowerment, including on the use of public assets. SNP MPs will seek ways of extending the community asset transfer provisions of the legislation to include property in Scotland owned by UK government departments.

We have also **established a new Empowering Communities Fund**. It has an **additional £10 million** to allocate in this coming year – enabling us to support over 200 community projects.