

Scottish Labour

Scottish Labour's National Recovery Plan

Volume One of Two

Contents

Volume One

Foreword by Anas Sarwar	2
Our National Recovery Plan	4
Our approach to democratic renewal.....	37
Jobs recovery	42
Building a sustainable economy	43
Good Work	48
Transport	54
Growing businesses and strengthening the public finances	59
NHS and social care recovery	66
Restarting our NHS	67
Creating strong foundations for the NHS of the future	69
Improving mental health	75
Action on social care	79
Eliminating health inequalities	84

Volume Two

Education recovery	87
Comeback plan for schools	88
Creating the best schools in the world	91
Colleges and universities	97

Early learning and childcare	101
Community Learning and Development.....	103
Climate recovery	104
Green jobs	106
Energy and fuel poverty	109
Environmental action.....	113
A joined-up approach to tackling climate change.	116
Community recovery	118
Cost of living	119
Social security	121
Housing	126
Social justice.....	132
Supporting the voluntary sector.....	138
Community safety.....	139
Rural areas and food.....	148
Culture and sport.....	154
International development.....	160

Foreword by Anas Sarwar

This last year has been so hard, for so many.

Yet by staying apart, we have come together like never before.

We can't come through this collective trauma and go back to the old arguments – fighting each other while our NHS loses out on funding, our children miss out on a world class education, and workers live in fear about whether they have a job to go to.

For the sake of the people of Scotland, and with the huge challenges which face us in the next five years, we must work to build a better future for our country – and we need to do that now.

When I had the honour of being elected leader of Scottish Labour earlier this year, I said my priority would be a national recovery plan for Scotland.

This manifesto fulfils that promise.

It is a collection of five distinct recovery plans for our jobs, NHS, education, climate, and communities.

It sets out bold missions that underline Scottish Labour's commitment to creating deep and lasting change in our country.

We do not hide the scale of our ambition, because we recognise the scale of the challenge ahead.

As we come out of this pandemic, we must focus on solutions which ensure Scotland comes back a better, stronger and fairer nation than the one which went into lockdown last year.

I am proud to present our positive vision for the vital years ahead.

I don't pretend to have all the answers to the challenges we face. No politician does.

But I will work with people across Scotland on areas of common interest and take on ideas that can help deliver our vision.

It will require a collective national effort to drive forward the change our country needs.

I am ready to play my part by focusing on what unites us, not what divides us.

I invite you to join us so that together we can deliver a national recovery which builds a fairer and stronger Scotland.

[signature]

Anas Sarwar

Leader of the Scottish Labour Party

Our National Recovery Plan

A Collective National Effort: Scottish Labour's National Missions

We are emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, but the impact on our people, our society and economy has been significant. It has been tough for us all but it

is important to recognise that the impact has not been felt equally across society.

Here we set out Scottish Labour's immediate priorities for recovery. It contains our plan to avoid a social and economic crisis, and to take steps to reduce the impact of the physical and mental health crises that Covid-19 has created.

Scottish Labour's **vision** for the country in five years is one that is free of the restrictions placed on us by Covid-19, where the looming social and economic crisis has been dealt with successfully through government and civic action, and where we have strengthened our NHS to prepare it for the future.

To achieve this vision, we believe our country must be focused on recovery for the next five years. That means the energies of our government and our parliament should be on a **collective national effort** to fully recover our country from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Scottish Labour has set out our recovery plans for jobs, the NHS, education, our climate and our communities. In each of these areas, Scottish Labour is establishing a **specific national mission** to focus the energy of our country on the big challenges we need to solve if we are to build a fairer Scotland with increasing equality and prosperity.

While our recovery plans set out immediate actions that the government must take, our national missions set bold and far-reaching ambitions for our country that will keep us focused on long-term recovery, not short-term interests and old arguments. Whether from government or opposition, Scottish Labour will seek to enshrine these national missions in law so that our sights remain firmly on the bold and long-term change our country needs.

This plan sets out the policies we believe need to be introduced in the next 12 months to build the foundations for achieving our national missions. In the detailed manifesto that follows, we set out the long-term policies that will work towards achieving our ambitions.

These national missions are not just targets for the next Scottish Government. They are intended to provide a focus for everyone in Scotland and to unlock creativity and innovation. The government cannot achieve these alone they require the collective effort of individual Scots, the private sector and the voluntary sector to make them a reality.

BOX START

National Mission One

Jobs Recovery

Ensure that everyone who can work has the offer of a job.

National Mission Two

NHS and Social Care Recovery

Increase the healthy life expectancy of people living in Scotland.

National Mission Three

Education Recovery

Move the Scottish education system to the top of international league tables.

National Mission Four

Climate Recovery

Achieve net zero emissions in Scotland and spark a green jobs revolution.

National Mission Five

Community Recovery

Make every community in Scotland a place where people can grow up, settle and work, with access to public services and free from poverty and hunger.

BOX END

Defeating Covid-19

This lockdown has to be our last. The vaccine has given us hope that Covid-19 can be beaten but the reality is that the virus is likely to be with us for some time to come. The pandemic has caused much devastation to our economy, health, education, and communities but many of the big challenges we face were not caused by Covid-19, they were there before; exposed and exacerbated during the crisis.

There are examples from all around the world of countries that have managed to shield their populations and economies from the worst of Covid-19 and it is these examples that Scotland should be following. We have the tools at our disposal but they need to be deployed properly if we are going to succeed. Our recovery cannot wait, it needs to start now and it cannot be undermined by another failure to keep the virus under control.

To support delivery of Scotland's recovery, Scottish Labour would roll out widescale testing to hunt down the virus in our communities and isolate it before it spreads. We need to deploy our full testing capacity, setting up testing sites across all communities and advertising their locations properly. Everyone should have access to at least twice-weekly testing, regardless of if they have symptoms, and there needs to be robust monitoring of Test and Protect so we know it is identifying every single case.

Identifying the virus is only the first step; we need to support people to self-isolate when they test positive to prevent the spread and keep everyone safe. Too many people are still being denied the Self Isolation Support Grant, so we will expand eligibility, offering everyone access to the payment and ensuring that no one has to choose between isolating and putting food on the table.

Jobs Recovery

National Mission One: Ensure that everyone who can work has the offer of a job

Months of lockdown have left the Scottish economy fragile and vulnerable to further shocks.

Unemployment is already at a five-year high, while hundreds of thousands of Scottish workers are currently on furlough or supported by schemes such as the self-employment income support scheme.

Business activity has been significantly reduced and, even with the easing of lockdown, it will take some time for the economy to return to pre-pandemic levels.

When furlough winds down, unemployment is predicted to rise and restarting businesses may take some time, particularly in sectors that will have to continue to work under significant restrictions. This means that there will be a continued need for government support to protect individual incomes, to smooth conditions for businesses as they reopen, and

to transition people into new employment where their job may be made redundant.

The approach taken by both the UK and Scottish Governments, while welcome, has focused on the immediate risks and stop-gap solutions, not on the long term health of workers and the economy. Extraordinary measures were taken to support people during the pandemic, but many have still fallen through the gaps. Now we need plans for how to mitigate the continuing social and economic consequences. People across Scotland complied with restrictions with the expectation that government would be there to help them out of this crisis.

That is why Scottish Labour's first national mission is to ensure that no one who can work is without a job. This demands a collective effort from government, the wider public sector, the private sector and trade unions to focus Scotland on action in this area. To achieve this national mission, Scottish Labour backs these immediate policies:

1. Jobs for recovery

The pandemic has caused job losses and curtailed industries. Long-term unemployment is damaging for individuals and wider society so Scotland cannot afford to have a recovery that leaves anyone behind. At the same time there is much work to do to restart our public services, restore our communities and tackle the climate emergency.

- Everyone aged under 25 who does not have a job, the long-term unemployed and every disabled person without a job, who are not already benefiting from other job schemes, will be guaranteed a job within the Scottish public sector, working to support Scotland's recovery with a wage paid for an average of six months by the Scottish Government.
- A training guarantee offered to everyone on the Jobs for Recovery scheme with 20% of their time dedicated to developing skills and seeking their next employment.
- Establish a route through which voluntary sector and private sector organisations can also apply to host applicants to the scheme at a reduced cost for the duration of their placement.

2. Train the workforce of the future

Covid-19 has changed our ways of working and we will need to respond to the changing nature of our economy. While some jobs will be permanently affected by the pandemic, other sectors need more employees. We need to reskill and upskill our workforce with quality training to meet that demand.

- The new Scottish Skills Benefit will offer everyone who is unemployed, along with those currently on furlough, a £500 grant for retraining while retaining their benefits or furlough payments. Individuals who are unemployed would also be eligible for a further

£750 in income support to reflect time spent in training or study.

- Introduce a Scottish Work Experience Guarantee for school age and further education students, with subsidies to remove financial barriers for completion, and CV and careers advice made available through secondary schools and colleges.
- Establish core training funds to subsidise the cost of entering, training or completing continued professional development, in particular targeting key professions where there are shortages such as nursing, health, care and engineering.

3. Support job creation

Opportunities for a generation of young people are at risk. In 2020 the number of unemployed young people rose to 45,000 and there are fears it could rise even higher. We cannot afford a youth unemployment crisis and a generation scarred because government did too little or acted too late.

- Supplementary funding to kick-start 'Kickstart' by providing a further six months of subsidy for wages, encouraging businesses to employ young people in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance. In exchange for the wage subsidy, employers would need to guarantee a permanent job at the end of the scheme.

- Reinvigorate apprenticeships across Scotland targeting 5,000 new places in the next financial year, with subsidised wages to raise pay for all and working with local authorities to establish local 'Share an Apprentice' schemes.
- Offer an Equal Access Careers programme to support individuals disadvantaged in the labour market with specific career support, training and placements. We would also extend the Job Start Grant to all young disabled people and double the grant offered to young disabled people and carer leavers to £500.

4. A public sector for public good

Throughout this crisis, private companies have been awarded government contracts with little or no competition. We need to reorient procurement so that it works for businesses in Scotland and ensures people here get the benefit of government spending.

- Pledge to ensure no publicly procured contract uses zero-hours contracts.
- Establish a Better Business Scotland certification scheme for businesses who want to work with the public sector to ensure they meet our Good Work criteria, which includes not using zero-hours contracts, collective bargaining, paying the Scottish Living Wage, and having a clear carbon reduction plan.

5. Invest in the Scotland of tomorrow

The Scottish economy in 10 years' time will look entirely different from what we see today. Many structural changes have already been accelerated by Covid-19 and so any economic plan needs to consider the long-term challenges, planning for the just transition to a greener economy.

- Supporting Scotland's fabrication and decommissioning industries in the North Sea by requiring a proportion of local procurement from oil companies operating in the UK Continental Shelf region and support for Scottish supply chains in the development and manufacture of renewable technologies.
- Host regular roundtables on Scottish industrial policy to ensure that government action on developing the industries of the future is informed by trade unions and business stakeholders.
- Restructure and grow the Scottish National Investment Bank so it can provide seed funding for new ideas, offer investment for 'capital for good' projects and support businesses to transition towards greener and more digital futures, all while creating jobs and supporting our Good Work principles.

NHS and Social Care Recovery

National Mission Two: Increase the healthy life expectancy of people living in Scotland

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, Scotland's NHS and social care systems were struggling. Nurses and doctors repeatedly warned about the under-resourcing of the health service; social care workers were stretched to breaking point and a key sign of a healthy society how long we live was stalling and going into reverse for the poorest among us.

Now Scotland faces the twin challenges of recovering from the very immediate crisis created by Covid-19, but also recovering our NHS from a decade of mounting problems.

The past year has reminded us of the crucial value of the NHS and our social care services, keeping us all safe and well when we need them the most. The NHS was not overwhelmed as many feared, but that was only achieved by significantly reducing demand on services. Thousands of people are now 'missing' from NHS outpatient appointments, thousands of operations have been cancelled and there were 7,000 fewer cancer diagnoses in 2020 than in the year before. Cuts to care packages have also left thousands of people taking on greater responsibility for unpaid care.

At the same time that physical health has been put at risk by Covid-19, people's mental health has been impacted by the stress of restrictions and the uncertainty about what the future holds. Waiting lists for child and adolescent mental health services are full, with many people being turned away and hundreds waiting over a year for support. The pressure on NHS 24's mental health crisis services has been overwhelming, leading to 25,000 crisis calls going unanswered during the pandemic.

None of these challenges are the fault of our NHS and social care staff. They have gone above and beyond during the crisis, but they now require the same level of support from government to get them through the coming years.

Our national mission to increase healthy life expectancy by five years binds together everything the country needs to be focused on to improve our health and wellbeing. The lack of progress in this area over the past decade points towards the lack of focus on tackling deep-seated problems that affect health outcomes; from alleviating poverty to investing heavily in health services.

To build the foundations to reach this ambition, we support a number of immediate priorities.

1. Get cancer treatment back on track

Many people with cancer have not been diagnosed during the pandemic, meaning there are a significant number of people who may not yet know they have cancer, and who will potentially need urgent treatment.

- Find these missing cancer diagnoses with a catch-up initiative across our screening programmes. This can be achieved by increasing staff and processing capacity in screening centres to clear the backlog of appointments by the end of 2021/22.
- Establish Rapid Diagnostic Centres in each health board area where GPs can refer patients who have suspicious but unclear symptoms so that instead of waiting months, patients can have a diagnosis within two weeks.
- Provide a single point of contact for every cancer patient to guide them through their treatment and provide personalised support for their emotional and practical needs.

2. Improve mental health care and support

Restrictions during the pandemic have increased stress for many and made life more challenging for those with pre-existing mental health conditions.

Action must be taken to address the decline in mental health across Scotland.

- Improve access to support with a new referral and triage service and ensure that every GP practice in Scotland has access to a dedicated mental health worker.
- Establish dedicated mental health A&Es in every health board area, integrated with suicide prevention and substance misuse services, to support people in crisis.
- To support new mothers and babies born during the pandemic we will establish Baby Clubs to encourage socialisation. We will offer an extra health visitor visit at 18 months, ensure women have adequate help to breastfeed and offer support to every woman experiencing post-natal depression.
- Increase resources available for mental health and increase the mental health budget to 11% of the NHS budget, to match spending in England and Wales.
- Support people back to work and young people back to school by offering a mental health assessment to every school pupil and a back to the workplace support programme for employers.

3. Address the backlog

The Covid-19 crisis has created a significant backlog in care and treatment. We must act to address this or it will risk the functioning of the NHS for years to come.

- Urgently invest in capital to upgrade NHS systems and facilities. By investing in digital healthcare, we can embed the gains that have been made in this area during the pandemic.
- Our NHS responded to Covid-19 by establishing the NHS Louisa Jordan Hospital. By establishing designated outpatient and elective centres in each health board area, we can triage waiting lists and clear the backlog.
- Health requires more than hospital treatment. We support rolling out the Hospital to Home service across Scotland and enshrining a Right to Rehab to aid patient recovery and support people with chronic health conditions.

4. Value the workforce

Workers in our NHS and in the social care sector have gone above and beyond during the pandemic. They need to be rewarded and supported as our services recover.

- We support a fair pay rise for NHS staff and we will work with the trade unions to put in place a long-term pay deal for staff that addresses historic underfunding and low pay, and makes the NHS an attractive place to train and work. To retain skilled staff, we support offering a working time review to every staff member considering retirement.

- Increase investment in occupational health so that healthcare professionals have somewhere to turn when they need mental health support now and in the future.
- Grow the workforce by increasing the number of Scottish domiciled places in medicine and nursing courses and doubling the number on the widening access to medicine programme.

5. Deliver a National Care Service

As Scotland's population ages, we need to ensure that the founding principles of the NHS extend to care for people through to the end of their lives. That means providing people who need care with support to lead full and independent lives.

- Make social care freely available at the point of need by reversing the recent narrowing of eligibility criteria and removing all non-residential charges.
- Create a National Care Service that prioritises national funding and retains local services to ensure that local expertise, accountability and community input are not lost.
- Respect the workforce by immediately increasing their pay to £12 an hour, and working together with trade unions towards a further rise to £15 an hour.
- Support individuals who carry out unpaid caring work so they feel valued, included and supported as equal partners in care provision.

Education Recovery

National Mission Three: Move the Scottish education system to the top of international league tables

School closures as a result of Covid-19 have resulted in unprecedented disruption to Scotland's education system. Since the advent of universal education provision, there has been no comparable loss in schooling for our young people.

The impact of this on general attainment, the poverty-related attainment gap, social and emotional development and ultimately life chances for impacted young people could be significant. Not only will this generation of pupils have to deal with the impact of this year but are likely to leave school to be faced with an uncertain economic situation. We must support them with all the ideas, energy, but most importantly, resources, that we have.

A year ago, we came together as a country to save lives and to protect our NHS. We now need the same level of leadership for education. Above all else there is a moral imperative to ensure the pandemic does not hamper the life chances of the next generation.

Scottish Labour's plan seeks to deliver hope to our young people. We must ensure that emerging from the relentless negativity, doubt and anxiety of the last

year we make a promise for their future that they deserve the best of opportunities. That will be achieved through hard work, imagination, the love of their community and the investment of a country that believes in them.

That is why our third national mission is to support our students and teaching workforce so that Scotland moves to the top of international education league tables.

1. Give every young person the dedicated support they need to succeed

The needs of every young person are different, and some may need more support to get back on track than others. Scottish Labour's approach would see the needs of every young person identified and the resources being provided to support them to succeed.

- To understand the needs of every young person, the government should provide each of them with a Personal Comeback Plan (PCP), based on an individual assessment. This would include a mental health assessment to understand the full range of their needs.
- A personal tutoring programme should be provided, accessible for all ages and all pupils. Referrals would come from teachers and those working with young people struggling to engage with school.

2. Enable young people to resit

Many young people believe they have missed out because of the cancellation of exams and the botched handling of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Alternative Certification Model.

- Any young person who wants to resit will be supported to do that. We support the establishment of a resit guarantee with a free place at college to take National Qualifications.
- Government should engage with colleges and universities to ensure that there is a no detriment policy for accessing further or higher education.

3. Support the teaching workforce

Our teaching workforce have had many demands placed on them over the past year: from delivering online lessons to running hub schools and grappling with new digital technology. We need to support the existing workforce and ensure that new teachers have the opportunity to enter the profession.

- To prevent further Covid-19 outbreaks in schools we will prioritise vaccinations for teaching and school staff, keeping the workforce safe and protecting children's education from further disruption.
- Every probationary teacher should be given a guaranteed completion opportunity to ensure that they can gain registration and help to refresh our workforce. Trainee teachers who have been unable

to complete training should be given the right to complete, at no cost to themselves.

- We must close the digital divide for students and staff by providing enhanced digital training for staff and a digital device for every pupil. Alongside this, we should consider targeted support for households which may not have broadband access.

4. Summer comeback

Young people need to be the beneficiaries of Scotland opening up again this summer. They should see their friends, make new ones and begin to live a full life again. This is essential to improve the mental and physical health of our children after an incredibly difficult year.

- We believe every young person should have the opportunity to focus on their own wellbeing over this summer, rather than academic catch up. We would give every young person a Summer Comeback Pass to provide free access to sport, transport, outdoor activities and culture.
- Ring-fenced resources should be made available for school trips to outdoor activity centres for all young people over the coming two years.
- These activities will provide much needed additional resources for our national youth, arts and outdoor organisations and enable them to keep their doors open.

Climate Recovery

National Mission Four: Achieve net zero emissions in Scotland and spark a green jobs revolution

Later this year, Glasgow will host the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) summit. This will be a massive moment for Scotland when the eyes of the world will be on us. We want Glasgow to be synonymous with world-leading action on climate change. But the first step we must take is to ensure that we are doing as much as we can, here at home, to make our contribution.

Without significant action, Scotland will not meet its climate targets by 2045. There are more greenhouse gases in our atmosphere than at any point in human history. Air pollution is killing 2,500 Scots every year and pollution is exceeding safety levels in nearly 40 areas within Scottish towns and cities. Further to this, one in nine species are at risk of extinction.

We must tackle the climate and nature emergencies while reducing the inequalities that Covid-19 has exposed and exacerbated. The transition to net zero is an opportunity to create thousands of jobs and address the immediate economic crisis caused by Covid-19. These measures, implemented immediately, would not just contribute to tackling the global climate emergency, they would kick-start

Scotland's economy, tackle unemployment, and deal with the rising cost of living.

Our fourth national mission restates our existing target to achieve zero net emissions in Scotland by 2045. However, without more action we will not meet these targets and we will continue to drift towards more irreparable damage to our climate.

1. Improve energy efficiency across Scotland

Scotland's buildings are a huge driver of climate emissions, contributing 23% of Scottish emissions. Nearly 75% of these come from residential buildings. Fewer than half of all homes are energy efficiency rating C or higher and a quarter of Scottish households are in fuel poverty. Investing in energy efficiency measures will reduce living costs, create jobs and make a significant contribution to reducing our carbon emissions.

- Scottish Labour has a plan to upgrade all homes to at least an energy efficiency rating of C or higher by 2030 and, where possible, zero carbon by 2045.
- We would establish a national housing agency to work closely with local authorities and coordinate the roll out of measures including insulation, double glazing, boiler replacement, forms of renewable heat, and heat networks.
- Our 2030 target will require a significant step change in current activity: at least 80,000 homes

would need to be renovated annually, more than double the current rate. Long-term, we estimate that at least 90% of homes will need to be fitted with a form of renewable heat such as heat pumps or heat networks.

- Low and middle income households would be awarded grant funding while other households would be offered interest free loans to pay for the upgrades, up to the value of £18,000. Fuel poor and rural homes would be targeted first.

2. Invest in Scotland's natural environment

In order to draw more carbon from the atmosphere, we need to invest in nature restoration.

- Scottish Labour would plant at least 15,000 hectares of trees a year and increase peatland restoration to 20,000 hectares each year, alongside measures to end commercial peat extraction.
- A Scottish Conservation Corps would be established, modelled on the Civilian Conservation Corps of the New Deal, to employ and train a new workforce dedicated to restoring Scotland's natural environment. This could employ up to 10,000 people, forming an important part of Scottish Labour's Jobs for Recovery guarantee and ensuring that roles are available across the country including in rural areas.

3. Create real change in Scotland's businesses through procurement and business support

The Scottish public sector purchases around £11 billion of goods and services each year. We need to move away from a narrow focus on price and towards a broader view of the role the public sector can play in making Scotland's businesses greener.

- Through our Better Business Scotland certification we will ensure that every business that wants to work with the public sector has a clear carbon reduction plan and a commitment to achieving net zero.
- Scottish Labour would adopt a local first approach to procurement, reducing carbon emissions by ensuring goods and services are procured locally.
- Where local suppliers don't exist, the Scottish National Investment Bank would be used to invest to help existing companies diversify or support the creation of new local supply chains. Support would be tied to our Good Work criteria and would promote cooperative business models.

4. Lead a Just Transition to net zero

Scottish Labour's just transition would mean no person or community is left disadvantaged as we move to a low carbon economy.

- Scottish Labour would deliver a statutory Just Transition Commission to focus on how the

transition to net zero would benefit those who are unemployed, underemployed or who are at risk of unemployment as a result of the current economic crisis and the transition.

- Scotland needs a bold industrial strategy to lay out how domestic manufacturing capacity must evolve to ensure that the growth in domestic renewable energy production leads to new jobs in Scotland. Alongside this, we would establish the Scottish Energy Development Agency to coordinate the growth in renewable energy production including in skills and training. It would work closely with the Scottish National Investment Bank to invest in the development of the domestic supply chain.
- Scottish Labour would only approve new developments for offshore wind farms when a plan for supply chain manufacturing was in place and conditions on job creation in Scotland were met.

5. Create greener communities

Covid-19 has brought into stark relief not only the value of green space but also the inequality of access to green space. Addressing this cannot wait. Progress to decarbonise our transport sector has also been too slow. Accelerating the decarbonisation of existing transport networks, and investing in the roll out of low carbon alternatives must be a priority.

- Scottish Labour would adopt a new approach to development that puts public health and the

environment first. Our National Housing Agency would be centrally responsible for the acquisition of finance; land and housing; and dealing with derelict and vacant land, and act as a prime mover in driving the delivery of housing. It would ensure the development of well-designed communities with green space as a key consideration.

- Scottish Labour would reinstate the ability of public authorities to acquire land at existing use value for social homes. As a result the public sector would capture the uplift in the value of land that results when planning permission is granted, unlocking significant funds for infrastructure and development.
- Existing communities can't be neglected. We would invest in councils to create urban and rural safe active travel routes, green spaces and food growing places.
- Scottish Labour will invest in interest-free government loans to help more low and middle income households to buy electric cars over the next two years and accelerate the roll-out of electric charging points with an initial focus on areas with the least access.
- We will increase active travel spending to 10% of the overall transport budget, giving priority to encouraging and enabling people to get out of their cars, onto bikes, and walk more.

- We will introduce free bus travel to under 25s and invest in the manufacture and widespread introduction of accessible low-emission buses.

Community Recovery

National Mission Five: Make every community in Scotland a place where people can safely grow up, settle and work, with access to public services and free from poverty and hunger

Over the past year, people have come together to support each other through the Covid-19 crisis. While the pandemic has exposed many weaknesses in our society, it has also revealed the strength of our communities.

When people were asked to stay at home, many rediscovered a love for their local area. However, it also showed the gaps in availability of basic services in many communities from hospital services to high street shops.

Deep inequalities which have been growing in Scotland over the past decade were also exposed. Covid-19 hit hardest in areas with the highest levels of poverty, and in those communities it was often the people who had the least who were the most affected. Growing levels of unemployment are once again driving people to foodbanks, and the rising cost of living is only set to make that problem worse.

Emerging from the pandemic, many people are asking questions about the kind of society we want to build. We believe that has to start with investing in every community to make them places where people want to grow up, settle and work. To tackle the deep poverty that exists in many communities across Scotland we have to reinvigorate our towns and villages, use public spending to maximise local employment and ensure there are opportunities for local investment and development.

We also must help people directly by increasing their personal and family incomes. That must start with ensuring people have access to decent work close to where they live. It also means using the Scottish Parliament's social security powers to get more money into people's pockets. Our final national mission imagines a Scotland where people can live free from poverty and hunger in strong communities where they can live fulfilling lives.

1. Increase personal and family incomes

Real and lasting change to eradicate poverty is only achieved through deep structural changes to our economy. However, an immediate priority is ensuring that people have enough money to live a full life and not struggle to make ends meet. We support measures to alleviate the financial pressures on low and middle income earners.

- 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.
- Scottish Water has built up a £531 million surplus five times higher than the water regulator promised customers when setting water charges. At a time of pressure on household incomes, some of this should be returned to customers as a £100 rebate for every household.
- We must abolish the council tax and replace it with a fairer alternative based on property values and ability to pay. Any freeze of the council tax imposed by central government must be fully funded so there are no further cuts to essential local services.
- By implementing a Debt Advice Levy we will redirect some of the huge financial benefits which creditors gain from free money advice back into sustainably funding these crucial services. Credit unions can also offer better alternatives to high-cost credit so we will develop the fund for helping their growth and innovation, improving online accessibility and capacity for swift loan decisions.
- To support our older generations we will establish a Staying Connected fund which will offer grants, up to the annual value of the TV licence, currently £159, to all households with an individual aged 75 and over to either cover the costs of their licence or go towards internet and connectivity bills.

2. Create demand in our high streets, town centres, and vulnerable sectors

In recent decades, the drive towards centralising services, retail and jobs in city centres, as well as the move to online shopping, has resulted in our town centres being hollowed out, even before Covid-19 hit. The impact of the pandemic on our cultural, leisure and tourism sectors has also been huge. The scale of the challenge requires action to save these sectors and the jobs they maintain, while investing to support regeneration over the longer term.

- Bring shoppers back to our town centres with a £75 prepaid card to every adult in Scotland to be spent in non-food retail businesses. A similar scheme in Jersey has successfully stimulated the local economy there and encouraged people to shop local.
- Roll out the Great Scottish Staycation 2021, with Scottish Government funded subsidies of holiday accommodation across Scotland whereby any tourist travelling within or to Scotland receives every 3rd night of accommodation free on off-peak dates between September to November 2021.
- Deliver a High Street Bailout plan with reduced business rates on non-grocery bricks and mortar shops. We will set up a taskforce to fully examine how business rates need to change to ensure the digital economy makes a fair contribution to local services.

- Existing shops on our high street need to be supported to continue. That is why we support the establishment of a Business Restart Fund to continue to support businesses facing financial hardship as a result of restrictions. We will also support businesses to transition into new markets or online through the establishment of a Business Transition Fund.

3. Prioritise local ownership

Local communities should benefit from economic development in their areas, but too often wealth flows out of our towns and villages into businesses headquartered elsewhere.

- We will prioritise local procurement by having a 'local first' approach to all procurement. We will encourage local authorities to do the same to ensure that local businesses get the best opportunity to bid for local contracts.
- We believe local development organisations should be established to lead local economic development and to identify investment opportunities in communities across Scotland.
- We will work with local authorities to promote alternative business models including cooperatives, social enterprises, and in-house provision.

4. Housing

To reinvigorate our communities, we need to have a supply of high quality and affordable housing. Too many people are priced out of their local housing market or forced to move because of a lack of homes.

- We support building 200,000 zero carbon social homes over ten years, with parity of grant funding between councils, cooperatives and housing associations.
- The pandemic has highlighted the importance of revisiting mandatory minimum space, quality standards and energy performance in new and refurbished homes. We believe these should all be reviewed as part of a long-term housing strategy.
- Land prices lie at the centre of the housing crisis. We believe the law should be reformed to allow for the acquisition of land for social housing at existing use value and use development gain to finance essential infrastructure.

5. Safety

In order to thrive, our communities need to be safe and people must be able to feel safe and free of the fear of crime. Creating communities where people feel secure means acknowledging the dangers that specific groups face. In particular, the police and justice system must be responsive and sensitive to women's experiences of male violence. The Covid-19 pandemic has increased pressure on the justice

system and made the process of accessing justice more time consuming and stressful.

- Restore connections between the police force and local communities, invest in specialist staff to rebalance the workforce and increase the number of officers in local divisions by at least 500 to reverse cuts to local policing.
- Invest in enhanced digitisation within the courts system, mitigating barriers caused by digital inequalities and dealing with the backlog of 34,000 cases.
- Improve access to justice by reforming legal aid, roll out specialist domestic abuse courts and introduce a specialist sexual offences court.

Our approach to democratic renewal

A strong recovery will only be achieved with strong national institutions that work in the interests of people across Scotland. The UK's departure from the EU will result in many more powers for the Scottish Parliament in the coming years.

The heightened need for reform to ensure powers are used effectively and at the right level across the UK's four nations demands a response from central government.

For a decade, discussions about power in Scotland have only been concerned with the power that sits in the hands of MSPs and Scottish Government Ministers in Holyrood. We have a broader and more ambitious vision which involves a radical redesign of the UK's democratic institutions, more powers of scrutiny for Holyrood, and a radical transfer of powers from Edinburgh into communities across our country. It also must involve as close a relationship with the EU as possible.

Reform of the United Kingdom

The last thing Scotland needs is more constitutional turmoil and economic instability; our collective priority must be the national recovery from Covid-19 so we do not believe there should be another independence referendum.

Labour is democratic socialist party. We do not support independence and we believe that we achieve more together than we do alone. At a time when we must pull our country together to recover from Covid-19, it would be irresponsible for the SNP to distract from that with an independence referendum and to unleash vast public spending cuts in an independent Scotland.

The United Kingdom needs to work for all parts of our country and, at present, it does not. We believe a democratically and economically renewed Scotland is

stronger within a democratically and economically renewed United Kingdom. While the country is focused on recovery from Covid-19 over the next five years, we will not support a second independence referendum.

A distribution of powers to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish local government is a far better alternative to an even greater accumulation and centralisation of powers in Westminster and Holyrood. This means a new settlement for local government, ending an era of SNP centralisation at the expense of local democracy.

Labour has taken the initiative to establish a Constitutional Commission and we support a renegotiation of the Fiscal Framework. We support further devolution of powers to Holyrood including borrowing and employment rights, with a UK floor that would encourage a race to the top on workers' terms and conditions. Now that we have left the EU, we must explore the need to reform our immigration system so that it works for all nations and regions in the UK. We also support a UK Council of Ministers and a UK Council of Parliaments and Assemblies established on the principle of cooperation and transparency, rather than conflict and secrecy, as a step towards a much more federal approach in the UK.

Re-establishing a people's parliament and government

We want to re-establish the vision of a people's parliament, making full use of the Scottish Parliament's powers to tackle poverty and inequality, to spread democracy, and redistribute power and wealth, to plan the economy for the future wellbeing of the people and the planet, and to do this with the enduring values of cooperation and solidarity. This will only be possible when people believe that the Scottish Parliament works for them.

That is why we are proposing a Clean up Holyrood Commission to consult on the changes needed to strengthen the parliament's ability to hold the government to account and restore faith and trust in Holyrood. This will report in the next year. We want to see an independent ethics commission overseeing the Scottish Government and parliamentary privilege extended to MSPs so they have the same protection as MPs when raising issues.

Committees need more autonomy so we believe that conveners should be elected by the whole Scottish Parliament, not appointed by their own party, and committees require stronger powers to compel witnesses to appear and give evidence.

Scottish Labour supports the people's right to know and an end to the secrecy that pervades too much of

government. We will reform the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act to support a robust transparency and accountability culture, with more proactive publication and to force government departments to be fully transparent over public finances.

Strengthening local democracy

Devolving powers to local government is a key part of Scottish Labour's vision for devolution. Scottish Labour supports the principle of subsidiarity making sure that decisions are taken as close as possible to the very people they affect. We will develop a framework of universal basic services and with our community recovery fund, strengthen the social infrastructure that minimises social isolation and builds stronger communities. Scottish Labour will promote reforms which are designed and led by local government, and which offer collective provision of services, to tackle inequalities and keep wealth created by our communities within our communities.

Scottish Labour supports measures to revitalise local democracy and promote greater community empowerment. If Scotland is to truly be seen as a democratic leader, we need to implement innovative ways of working which embrace citizens and decision-makers as equals. We will place importance on capturing the opinions of those who have been marginalised in the past and develop methods of

amplifying and embracing these voices in policy and financial planning. Those who have been described as 'hard to reach' are too often 'easy to ignore'. This includes a Right to Space to ensure communities have places to meet and funding to build the capacity to participate as active citizens. We believe giving more power to communities will help create a more preventative approach that tackles problems at source rather than merely managing them once they've happened.

Jobs recovery

National Mission One: Ensure that everyone who can work has the offer of a job.

Scotland faces the immediate and very real challenge of averting an unemployment crisis this year.

Hundreds of thousands of people losing their jobs would not just be an economic crisis, it would lead to a significant social crisis. Our immediate priority is to avoid this by using the additional resources available for Covid-19 support to pay for an immediate stimulus package to support individuals, businesses and public services.

Keeping people in work, helping people to retrain and sustaining businesses which can provide employment in future is essential to building the foundations to recover the Scottish economy. In the longer term, our focus has to turn to addressing the wider problems in

Scotland's economy. Since the last recession after the banking crisis, Scotland's growth has lagged behind the rest of the UK. Our long-term focus is investing in the Scottish economy to catch up and exceed the UK's performance.

Our first national mission is ambitious – ensuring that everyone who can work has the offer of a job. By setting this mission, we want to ensure that the economy works for everyone and we will work with trade unions, employers and individuals from a range of backgrounds to make this a reality.

Building a sustainable economy

Scotland's level of growth is low and is now faced with new challenges arising from the pandemic and Brexit. We face the biggest jobs crisis for a generation, and the Scottish and UK Governments' response is simply inadequate. Even before the pandemic, the Scottish economy suffered from low investment and productivity, limited domestic ownership, coupled with labour market inequalities. The Scottish Government has failed to use its procurement, education and investment powers to support the economy. Both governments were slow to respond to the pandemic's impact on the economy. Scottish Labour will have a laser-focus on job creation and a bold industrial strategy, and will engage positively with businesses and trade unions to create the sustainable economic recovery we need.

Scottish Labour will restructure and grow the Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB) to invest in the economy, with long-term economic planning and a willingness to intervene when required. Growth has to be sustainable for the long-term and for the planet. Our climate recovery plan will tackle climate change while ensuring a just transition. We will create high-quality jobs with a real focus on research and development that leads to growth opportunities across Scottish industries.

Our jobs recovery will learn from the lessons of the past by rejecting austerity. We will bring employers, unions and government together under the framework of a Social Partnership Act. Support from government provides an opportunity to shape a fairer economy. Recovery deals for each sector should include a range of financial and other support to business. In return, they should sign up to enforceable Good Work obligations, including working towards commitments on pay, conditions, equal opportunities, carbon reduction, skills and collective bargaining.

Sustainable growth also has to share prosperity to create a better society for everyone. We will support the growing number of women who are starting new enterprises. To help tackle the gender pay gap we will improve the gender balance in leadership positions, target training, strengthen childcare, and ensure women get a fair share of government investment.

Scottish Labour recognises that Scotland's economic recovery could not be successful without the support from communities. The public health crisis has seen an amazing response from communities, with energy and imagination that comes from solidarity, empathy and a genuine belief in the power of working together. This power needs to be harnessed. That is why Scottish Labour will support local communities and reinforce their strengths through Community Wealth Building programmes, which are currently being put into practice by Scottish Labour councils. Community wealth building is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

It provides local investment opportunities for pension funds and means we can capture wealth in a way that benefits our communities.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of shops closing their doors on Scotland's high streets was accelerating. Our high streets and town centres are more than places to shop; they are places we go for company, culture and character. We will reform the commercial property market, ensure fair pay for retail workers, and attract people back through better transport, public services, leisure, health and housing policies. We will also put programmes in place to help

small businesses upskill, including support for digital capabilities.

The privatisation of public services has failed our economy, with investment only serving private corporations' interests rather than the people of Scotland. Scottish Labour will halt this economic model by promoting common ownership nationally and locally. We will establish a Workers Ownership Fund with the aim of doubling the number of cooperatives and supporting alternative business models, including social enterprises. Studies show that employee ownership boosts workers' commitment and motivation, leading to greater innovation and productivity.

We will establish an Entrepreneur Unit and appoint a Minister for Entrepreneurship to ensure entrepreneurship is promoted in the public, private and voluntary sectors. This will be linked to measures that drive innovation, connecting our colleges and universities to business through expanded innovation hubs, boosting research and development, using big data, and using government procurement to support SMEs. As the pandemic has highlighted, we must speed up the infrastructure and access to full-fibre broadband to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and encourage flexible working options, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas.

We would support the development of Scottish data hubs and local supply chain manufacturing.

Scotland needs bold and urgent action to build a wellbeing economy. Economic growth must be fuelled by more than high employment and longer working hours. A prosperous wellbeing economy is one that provides financial security for families, builds opportunities for our young people, supports innovation, creates jobs and grows vibrant businesses and social enterprises.

Scottish Labour is committed to retaining a public sector water service and will end the creeping privatisation of water and wastewater services. This public service delivers a quality service more cost-effectively than private companies in England, despite the additional costs of managing water in Scotland.

We will end the market systems of regulatory control and replace it with a Scottish Water Plan driven by citizens' views. We will develop a clear strategy to close the disparity gap between public supply and private supplies both in terms of resilience to climate change impacts on the availability of water and in quality of drinking water.

"The last year has been really tough for Scotland with lots of businesses closed down. We should be concerned that without a plan to protect jobs, more

will be lost. I'm voting Scottish Labour because they have a plan that will be totally focused on recovery." –
DEENA, ABERDEEN

Good Work

An economy that works for everyone requires better wages and more secure employment, and greater redistribution of the wealth generated. Too many jobs are insecure, without guaranteed hours or income.

That insecurity then flows through our economy, holding it back from the stress it puts on working people to the pressure it puts on family finances. The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated Scotland's existing labour market inequalities. We need a recovery that works for everyone including women, disabled people, young people and diverse minority communities.

Striving for equality in the labour market is just one principle out of several that Scottish Labour will prioritise in order to make Scotland a Fair Work Nation. In the recently published 'Fair Work in Scotland' report, the Convention revealed that faster progress is needed if Scotland is to hit its target of being a leading Fair Work Nation by 2025. Fair work plays a crucial role in achieving economic growth, more innovative and productive workplaces and eradicating in-work poverty. While the Scottish Government's Fair Work Action Plan sets out a range

of ambitions, it doesn't fully deploy the Scottish Government's existing powers. Scottish Labour will go much further, developing a Good Work Plan, which will not merely encourage good work, but will require compliance. Good Work will promote the quality of work and fairness in line with trade union charters developed by UNISON, Unite and USDAW in their respective sectors. We will use all the levers of government to revitalise collective bargaining, including sectoral bargaining, coupled with a more robust social dialogue and the promotion of trade union membership. A Scottish Monitoring Agency will ensure that procurement conditions are achieved.

Scottish Labour's Better Business Pledge will be a key part of the Good Work Plan, requiring all businesses that benefit from public procurement to commit to using no zero-hours contracts or similar insecure work practices, paying the Scottish Living Wage and producing a clear carbon reduction plan. Companies should also pay the taxes that they are supposed to.

We are facing the worst jobs crisis in a generation, with young people set to be hit particularly hard. There is significant evidence that people below the age of 25 are more likely to be let go by employers and less likely to be hired than older adults during a recession. The evidence is clear that youth unemployment has profoundly damaging effects on both the individual and society. This 'scarring effect' that lowers long-term

employment prospects and earning potential has an impact that, for many, is still felt decades later.

Without bold action, Scotland faces an unemployment crisis that will become a national emergency. The scale of the problem that confronts us requires a response equally as ambitious as our initial response to the pandemic. Scottish Labour is proposing the most ambitious jobs creation plan in the history of devolution – a jobs guarantee scheme that is worthy of its name. Under the Jobs for Recovery scheme, the Scottish public sector will guarantee that those not benefitting from other jobs schemes can apply to join the public sector for an average of six months. The scheme will be open to every person under 25 who does not have a job, everyone over 25 who has been long-term unemployed, and every disabled person who does not have a job. Roles will be additional to the current workforce and 20% of the time would be allocated for developing skills and seeking employment beyond the scheme. It will include a mechanism whereby the voluntary sector and the private sector can apply to host these scheme applicants at a reduced cost to the employer for the duration of their placement.

Further to this, we would deliver funding for the UK-wide Kickstart scheme to include a further six month subsidisation of wages and establish 5,000 new apprenticeship places in the next financial year.

Support and subsidisation would be provided to employers hiring an apprentice for the first 12 months of their apprenticeship on the assurance that the employer commits to employing the apprentice for the duration of their training. We would also work with local authorities to establish localised 'share an apprentice schemes' within priority sectors – initially construction and agriculture that will formalise opportunities to 'work share' apprentices either within a week, or on short duration contracts, without impacting their training.

We will support lifelong learning, including union learning, to ensure workers are not left behind in a period of technological change, prioritising the development of skills needed for low-carbon jobs. This includes ending poor quality apprenticeships and replacing them with genuine off-the-job learning and employment opportunities that also tackle occupational gender segregation.

We also need to promote better and earlier access to work-based learning. We are committed to introducing a National Work Experience Scheme for school age and further education age students, with subsidies to be given to remove financial barriers to completion.

Women will be disproportionately impacted by job disruption as a result of Covid-19 and are also more likely to lose their job in the anticipated job recession.

Two female-dominated sectors, wholesale/retail and accommodation/food services, have the highest rates of furlough in the latest data release, heightening women's risk of redundancy over the course of the crisis. Women make up the majority (77%) of key workers in care, early years and childcare, nursing and in supermarkets, but are undervalued, underpaid and under protected.

We will equality proof all policy and legislation and would introduce statutory gender pay reviews across the Scottish public sector. We will support the employer accreditation programme Equally Safe at Work through continued funding.

We will also transform care work by redistributing the caring and unpaid work responsibilities between women and men and between the family and the state. We will designate childcare as a key growth sector, along with social care, to recognise care as a vital infrastructure and key component of Scotland's economic recovery. Effective utilisation of women's skills and talents is a catalyst for economic growth, worth up to £17bn to Scotland's economy. Scotland's economic recovery must be gender-sensitive and address pre-existing gender inequality to ensure we reach economic wellbeing for all.

The pandemic has highlighted the need to strengthen worker safety in Scotland. Protecting the health and

safety of workers also protects public health and the economy. Local authorities will be funded to ensure statutory safety inspections are undertaken. We support establishing a Scottish NHS-based occupational health service, roving safety representatives, a toxic use reduction strategy, and strengthening electrical and building regulations, including protection of title for electricians. We will work with employers to ensure psychologically healthy workplaces that support workers to thrive mentally and physically, and promote pilot schemes to reduce the length of the working week. During the last parliament, Scottish Labour used Members' Bills to deliver a statutory right to free period products, enhanced protection against violence and abuse for shop workers, and reform of tied pubs. We have also proposed a range of Members' Bills to tackle issues like corporate culpable homicide and wheelchair provision.

We will introduce further comprehensive legislation to place duties on employers to reduce risks and strengthen criminal law. We will also introduce stronger measures to tackle modern-day slavery.

We need to transform the worlds of paid and unpaid work by redistributing the caring and unpaid work responsibilities between women and men and between the family and the state. Crucial to this is recognising the important role unpaid work plays in

the functioning of the economy. Our Equal Access Careers programme will support individuals from groups more at risk of unemployment. It will offer targeted career support, training and placements, and will extend the Job Start Grant to all young disabled people and double the grant to £500 for the young disabled and care leavers.

We will also designate childcare as a key growth sector and establish core training funds for key, in demand public sector careers, subsidising the cost to enter and train (both initially and as part of continued development) across nursing and health, teaching, care and engineering.

Transport

The Scottish public transport system is a patchwork of services, with many areas left behind with no decent provision. Scottish Labour will rebuild our public transport to support the economy, strengthen our communities and cut emissions.

Scottish Labour has long campaigned to bring all our railways back into public ownership, so we welcome the decision to nationalise ScotRail. Scottish Labour will bring all of Scotland's railways under public ownership including the Caledonian Sleeper and push for the power to end the flawed franchising system for good. This will enable us to deliver a public sector operator that protects staff, delivers excellent value for

travellers, and ensures our rail system is a fit-for-purpose, truly world-leading service for years to come. Trade unions must have a seat on the board of the new public sector operator. Scottish Labour will carry out a complete review of our branch rail network, seeking to increase rail connectivity between our smaller towns and villages, expanding on the success of the Borders Railway by reopening stations and restoring neglected services. We will also aim to create surface links to transport hubs like our airports. We will decarbonise Scotland's railways within 15 years, focusing on a rolling programme of electrification. We will better promote the use of rail freight. We will ensure our rail service is safe and fully accessible to all who travel by train and we will end the outsourcing of railway services. Our new, public sector rail system will seek to make train journeys between our seven cities faster than going by car.

The SNP Government has had the power to deliver a public bus service since 2019 by enacting the Transport Act but has delayed doing so. Scottish Labour will enact the Transport Act, enabling our bus services to go back into public hands with start-up resources for councils to run them – not to line the pockets of shareholders, but as a public service that we will all benefit from, learning from the successful examples of Lothian Buses and Transport for London. We will extend free bus travel to under 25s, with a long-term goal of working towards universal free bus

travel. This will include promoting the manufacture and the widespread introduction of accessible low-emission vehicles, including hydrogen-powered buses. The Scottish bus network will be reinvigorated, ensuring that rural bus routes are expanded to ensure a regular, affordable service for those who rely on it. Through common ownership, we will deliver an affordable, integrated public transport system with a smart ticket system.

We will increase active travel spending to 10% of the overall transport budget, giving priority to encouraging and enabling people to get out of their cars, onto bikes, increasing walking and public transport use for better health and a cleaner environment. This will include assessing and developing safe cycling routes. We will also use the planning system in urban areas to plan for less car use, making all residential areas low traffic neighbourhoods by reducing speeds and volumes of through traffic while maintaining local access for those who need it. We will consult on changing the default speed limit on restricted roads to 20 mph, to ensure safer speeds where people live, work and play. We will create neighbourhoods where people can access all the services they need within a 20-minute walk.

Scottish Labour will develop and deliver an active travel plan with enforceable targets for cycling and walking levels, to include a survey of condition and

funding of maintenance of the path network. We will implement a gendered approach to transport infrastructure, ensuring women's safety, convenience and affordability are properly addressed. After the long Scottish Government delays we will reprioritise and expand the implementation of low emission zones in Scotland, and we will explore the implementation of minimum air quality standards around our schools.

While our national focus should be on reducing the need for private car use, Scottish Labour will revolutionise the delivery of electric cars in Scotland, including increasing interest-free government loans to help more low and middle income households to buy electric cars over the next two years. We will explore the possibility of siting a gigafactory in Scotland to build the batteries for electric vehicles and accelerate the creation of charging points, including in less well-served areas and for owners who do not have access to a residential charger. We support the expansion of car clubs across Scotland.

Road maintenance has suffered badly during the years of austerity with costs spiralling for local authorities, who have been forced to slash budgets in line with central government cuts. Along with a fair funding package for local authorities, Scottish Labour will create a fund to finance the repair of our essential road and path network, ensuring that potholes are

eliminated, maintenance workers' jobs are protected, and our networks remain safe to use.

Key routes, such as the A83, need improvement and enhancement to deliver improved road safety, journey time and reliability. We will also abolish the workplace parking levy.

Working with islanders and remote communities, we will carry out a full review of ferry services in Scotland to ensure that the right vessels are on the right routes at the right time. Scottish Labour believes all lifeline services should be in public hands with proper investment in a new fleet of ships fit for the future, while protecting workers' terms and conditions. We will also develop a new strategy to upgrade our ports and ensure that repair and maintenance of Scotland's ferries happens in Scotland. Scottish Labour will introduce a programme of repairs to ensure our waterways operate safely into the future. Ferry travel should also be free for under 25s.

The legislation governing taxi and private hire services needs to keep pace with technological change and ensure a level playing field between operators. We believe there is a case to legislate for national standards to guarantee safety and accessibility.

Our air industry has suffered through the Covid-19 pandemic. Scottish Labour will take a four nations

approach to bringing our aviation industry back, working with the UK Government to ensure that routes are reopened. We will work with the sector to implement a targeted support package for the industry which will be tied to commitments to support jobs, and good terms and conditions within the sector. Key to the recovery plan will be a commitment from the industry that any support will be predicated on reducing CO2 emissions and combating the climate emergency. We will retain air discount schemes for the Highlands and Islands.

Growing businesses and strengthening the public finances

We need our public finances to remain resilient and for our small businesses to grow as we emerge from Covid-19 in order to rebuild our economy. This requires our public finances to be managed in a responsible, fair and competent manner. It's time to maximise our economic levers and provide fiscal stimulus to benefit the whole of Scotland. Scottish Labour would deliver a more resilient and prosperous local government, ensuring a strong financial footing so councils can plan long-term and deliver for our communities. When spending public money, we have to do so credibly and ethically. We have the chance to properly enshrine the resilience and economic growth we want to see in Scotland post-Covid-19 through a reappraisal of our public finances.

SMEs are the lifeblood of Scotland's economy. With as many as 350,000 SMEs operating in Scotland, providing an estimated 1.2 million jobs, they are essential not just to our local economies and high streets but to the Scottish economy as a whole.

Scottish Labour has championed workers and businesses throughout the pandemic, calling for wider and clearer support for SMEs. We truly believe that in order for Scotland to successfully recover from the impact of the pandemic, businesses must be at the heart of any recovery plan. That is why Scottish Labour will repurpose Scottish Enterprise as a business recovery agency, in partnership with other enterprise agencies and Business Gateway to help SMEs recover and grow. We will have a renewed focus on Co-operative Development Scotland.

Through our Business Restart Fund we will ensure extended support for those sectors still facing financial hardships as we ease out of lockdown. It will build upon the existing business support offered during the pandemic and use government support to promote our Good Work principles.

Scottish Labour will also offer a Business Transition Fund which will provide growth opportunities for SMEs to flourish and identify new markets to increase business productivity levels. Scottish Labour accepts that more and more customer engagement will move

online, a trend that has been severely accelerated by Covid-19. This is why our business transition fund would provide the framework for our SMEs to keep up with larger companies with more access to online resources. This fund would empower and support business in making the transition to the digital marketplace and ensure they were not left behind by the changes we are seeing in the sector.

We also believe that in order for SMEs to grow, we need programmes to promote and revive fiscal stimulus. Between 2016 to 2019 there were 414 store closures in Scotland, even before the impact of Covid-19 was felt. With the risk of so many businesses going to the wall as a direct cost of the pandemic, our high streets and town centres are likely to suffer greatly. Scottish Labour wants to breathe life back into Scotland's struggling high streets by offering a targeted voucher scheme focused on high street retail. This will amount to £75 per adult to be spent in non-food retail and help boost local economies.

Since 2016, the Scottish Government has had a broad range of fiscal powers available to it which could better support our economy, yet the SNP has failed to maximise these. Scottish Labour believes in the powers of progressive taxation. We believe in the devolution of new borrowing powers to enable further investment in recovery. That is why we will aim to use the review of the Fiscal Framework next year to lift the

limitations of the framework which the SNP put in place. We would end the use of private finance for public infrastructure, ending the poor value for money Non-Profit Distributing (NPD) deals and reforming infrastructure financing to ensure best value over the life cycle of key public infrastructure projects.

Scottish Labour is aware that a successful economic recovery is one that recognises the importance of local economies and values local government resources. This requires reform of funding for local authorities and a complete review of taxes levied by local government. Revenue and capital funding must be provided on a three year basis to enable planning and predictability. We must abolish the council tax and replace it with a fairer alternative based on property values and ability to pay. Any freeze of the council tax imposed by central government must be fully funded so there are no further cuts to essential local services. We will identify a portfolio of optional additional levies, such as the tourist tax, to reflect local need and requirements. These reforms would give local government fiscal responsibility with local democratic accountability.

As well as maintaining the business rates exemption for non-grocery bricks and mortar retail for the 2021/22 financial year, we propose levelling up the business rates imposed on large warehouses used by majority online retailers versus bricks and mortar

stores. In the first instance, from 2022/23, there will be a 20% reduction in non-grocery bricks and mortar business rates, with a 20% increase in the rates paid by retail warehouses.

It is only right that companies that have profited from the necessary measures to contain the pandemic contribute to the cost of the national recovery.

However, when the SNP set a narrow scope for their review of business rates they missed a vital opportunity to capture the growth of online retail.

Scottish Labour will use the full range of devolved taxation powers to ensure these companies make an additional contribution to help other businesses recover and generate new jobs in our communities.

We will set up a taskforce to fully examine how business rates need to change to ensure the digital economy makes a fair contribution to local services.

Scottish Labour believes that income tax should be fair and progressive. Coming through the Covid-19 pandemic, there are large unallocated budgets resulting from Barnett Consequentials that should provide the basis for supporting the recovery. At this time, when household budgets are under pressure and we are focused on recovery, Scottish Labour will seek to avoid increasing income tax. If there is a need to increase income tax revenues during the next parliamentary term, Scottish Labour would support changes that generate income from those earning

over £100,000 a year. In the long-term, Scottish Labour's plan for jobs, skills and the economy would grow our income tax receipts.

Scottish Labour is aware that a strong economic recovery cannot be built on the foundations of rising debt. During the pandemic we have seen an increase in both personal and business debts. The pandemic has exhausted many businesses' cash reserves and they face ongoing costs as the Covid-19 crisis continues to affect trading. That is why Scottish Labour believes in using the levers at our disposal to keep overheads down as firms recover and maximising our Business Restart Fund in order to help businesses with debt.

Along with repairing business finances, there is an urgent need to tackle household finances too. At the point the pandemic struck, 220,000 households across Scotland were struggling to get by. One in four people in Scotland 1.1 million people reported that they could only cope for a month or less if they lost their main source of income, rising to one in three working-age people. Scottish Labour believes in extending support for people in debt by offering extra resources to frontline debt advisors. We also believe in the extension of the current six-week moratorium to twelve weeks to protect those considering a statutory repayment option, with a freeze on debt interest, fees

and charges being applied on the debt during the moratorium period.

Scottish Labour will encourage new forms of banking in line with our Community Wealth Building proposals. This includes support for the development of credit unions, including smaller local credit unions that maintain the mutual ethos. We will encourage all public bodies and contractors to offer their workers payroll deduction, through partnerships with credit unions. We will support action over payday lenders and illegal loan sharks, which have preyed on vulnerable people in Scotland's hardest-hit communities for too long.

Through these effective measures we would see Scotland's economy start to rebuild and public finances strengthened. Competent financial management, fiscally responsible local authorities, targeted support for SMEs, ethical public procurement and an environment where business can flourish, is what Scottish Labour would bring to the table.

"We just need to look at what happened to Bifab to know we need to get serious about protecting jobs. The SNP created lots of green jobs but in other countries. We need green jobs in Scotland. Labour's focus on a jobs recovery plan is exactly what we need." – DAWN, KIRKCALDY

NHS and social care recovery

National Mission Two: Increase the healthy life expectancy of people living in Scotland.

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, our NHS and our social care services faced significant challenges.

Today, we face the twin challenge of continuing to fight Covid-19 while also starting to deal with the growing NHS waiting lists that the pandemic has caused. Our most urgent priority is to restart our NHS so that it can provide high quality care to all who need it, when they need it. We must also immediately respond to the sharp rise in mental ill health that has been the result of stress and isolation during lockdown.

The past year has also brought into stark relief the importance of dealing with the deep health inequalities that exist in Scotland. For too many people in our country, life is short and plagued by chronic ill health. In recent years, progress to increase healthy life expectancy has stalled, and for the poorest groups in our society it has started to decrease. This is not the result of the pandemic – it is a failure of the Scottish Government to properly address health inequalities over the past 14 years. Your postcode and your social class should not determine how long you live.

That is why Scottish Labour is ambitious for the health of our country and why our national mission in health and social care is to increase healthy life expectancy

by five years. This is a mission that should drive not just those who work in NHS and social care, but everyone who believes we have a duty to constantly improve Scotland's health outcomes.

Restarting our NHS

Before the pandemic, NHS Scotland was struggling with a massive funding gap, health boards in special measures and key targets for waiting times missed. Problems with new facilities at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow and the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People in Edinburgh have hampered patient care and cost taxpayers. In the face of these pressures, a committed workforce has continued to deliver high-quality care.

Scottish Labour's priority will be to restart the NHS. We will do that by investing in the services and staff needed to tackle the backlog of cases caused by the pandemic and by setting health and care services on a stronger and renewed path for the future.

A particular focus must be on cancer services. Thousands of people have missed out on screening and many more have had their treatment postponed, delayed or cancelled. Scottish Labour will implement a catch-up initiative across our screening programmes, investing in staff and laboratory capacity to clear the backlog of appointments by the end of this financial year. Waiting times for diagnostic tests and urgent

cancer referrals are far too long so we will establish Rapid Diagnostic Centres to ensure targets are finally met. By the end of the parliament there should be a centre in every health board so that every patient receives their diagnosis and starts treatment within a maximum of two weeks.

Over the longer term we need an ambitious new cancer strategy with clear and measurable targets for a period of five years, backed up by the funding needed to drive change and support life-saving research. This includes ensuring that every cancer patient has a dedicated cancer support worker so they can access the personalised care and support they need.

Our health and care workforce have been the heroes on the frontline, but all too often they have been left exposed by the failure to support them properly. Scottish Labour wants NHS Scotland to be the best place for staff to recover from the trauma of the pandemic, and to work and train over the longer term. As well as a long-term and sustainable pay deal, mental health and wellbeing need to be taken seriously. Given the pressure that staff have been working under, they need space and support to decompress. We will increase resources in occupational therapy and offer a specialist health service in Scotland, so staff have somewhere

confidential to turn when they need mental health support.

Prioritising staff welfare means ensuring that basic facilities like hot meals and break rooms become the norm. Staff shortages are the consequence of poor workforce planning and they add pressure on already stretched services. To improve retention we will offer a working time review to all staff considering retirement, offering more flexible working arrangements. An effective workforce plan for all staff groups will ensure capacity matches demand. To support this we will increase places for Scottish-domiciled students on medicine and nursing courses, double the number of widening access to medicine places and introduce minimum student intakes and training places for key health professional roles.

"Anas Sarwar stood up for the families affected by what happened at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. Because he worked in the NHS he understands that we need to do more to help it and knows how to fight for it. That's why I'm voting Scottish Labour." – CATHERINE, DENNISTOUN

Creating strong foundations for the NHS of the future

We will also address the long-term delivery of healthcare. The pandemic has shown that NHS innovation does not have to be slow, but we have to

act decisively. To create space to safely tackle the backlog we will use the model of the NHS Louisa Jordan and establish designated outpatient and elective care centres. Over the longer term, each major hospital will have an elective care site to manage waiting lists and reduce last-minute cancelled operations. By increasing planned capacity, we will cut the expensive over-reliance on the private sector. We will publish a new estates and NHS capital investment plan, which will lay out how we will reverse the real terms cuts of the last decade and rebuild the physical infrastructure while ending Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) projects.

We want to embed the benefits of digital healthcare with increased access to virtual consultations, better data sharing, and online booking of appointments.

We also need to accelerate the roll out of e-prescribing to ensure we do not fall behind progress in the NHS in other parts of the UK. But that means ensuring that digital ways of working are accessible and reliable. We support investment in the NHS IT infrastructure, along with the full digitisation of patient records, controlled by patients and made accessible to all relevant health and care services who need them. At the same time we must mitigate digital exclusion, and maintain patient choice over how appointments are accessed to ensure that inequalities

are not exacerbated. We will also improve access and transparency of healthcare data across all services and, by creating a new NHS Drug Procurement Board, increase the public scrutiny and control of the medicines and treatments available.

Primary and community care is crucial to our vision for NHS Scotland. As well as GPs, the wider healthcare workforce supports patients and relieves pressure on GP services. By introducing minimum student intakes and increasing training places for roles such as physiotherapists and pharmacists, we will implement better planning of the multidisciplinary team. This in turn will relieve pressure on GPs, giving them more time with patients. We support a move to a minimum of 15 minute appointments. We also want to see improved links between GPs and community support services and believe this support should be targeted in areas of deprivation and highest need.

We believe that now is the time to transition GP services into a fully integrated NHS. NHS dental services also need a comprehensive overhaul. Scottish Labour supports greater integration with the NHS with options other than the small business model, including strengthening NHS community dentistry to improve access in deprived areas. The world-leading Childsmile programme was designed by Scottish Labour so we want to see it restarted and expanded to maximise the impact on inequalities.

To help people manage their condition better at home, and avoid readmission to hospital, we will roll out the Home to Hospital service nationally. We recognise the benefits that a 'Right to Rehab' would bring to those people with long-term conditions. This includes support for self-managing conditions with better access to specialist staff and support services. Alongside this, Scotland needs a network of specialist Long Covid clinics for individuals recovering from the virus and living with recurring symptoms. The pandemic is having a significant impact on the lives of stroke survivors and their families. We will ensure all stroke patients get timely access to evidence-based care. We also recognise that implementation of a Respiratory Care Action Plan will not be achieved without adequate funding.

Scottish Labour recognises that not all disabilities are visible. There is a growing body of evidence of suicide, mental health problems, and multiple co-existing health problems among the autistic and neurodiverse communities across Scotland. We support more timely assessment, pre-and post-diagnostic and life-long support – drawing on the effective approaches being generated by Autism Network Scotland, among others. The pandemic has also had a disproportionate impact on people with learning disabilities, with those individuals twice as likely to be infected with Covid-19 and twice as likely to have a severe outcome. We support establishing

an Autism and Learning Disability Commissioner to champion the human rights of autistic people, our neurodiverse communities, and people with a learning disability. We will strengthen epilepsy services, including establishing an epilepsy database, more specialist nurses, staff training and measures to encourage employment in people with neurological conditions.

There must also be better awareness-raising of eye health and effective and swift treatment within the NHS, including guaranteed access to treatments that can save sight if given in time. In Scotland, of the ten people who lose their sight every day only two will be offered support. Scottish Labour is committed to establishing a National Visual Impairment Plan, modelled on the Welsh Low Vision Service, to enable more consistent service provision across Scotland and sustainable maintenance of the universal access to NHS optometry.

Scottish Labour recognises the importance of laboratory services in driving healthcare. We will ensure adequate investment in staff, equipment, and IT support, recognising the predicted increased impact of recovery catch-up workflows on services, notably histopathology.

We recognise the concerns highlighting discrimination and unequal treatment for people with protected

characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 when accessing health services. Scottish Labour will bring Gender Identity Clinics (GICs) into line with other NHS services by setting an 18-week referral to first appointment target. We will also guarantee the right to self-refer to GICs under all health boards. We will introduce new guidance to prevent harmful stereotyping, establish an inquiry to explore an "informed consent" model of treatment and will update the Gender Reassignment Protocol to allow for greater flexibility in treatment.

We will seek to improve the funding and integration of hospice services, including work in the community, strengthening bereavement support and maintaining funding for specialist hospice and community care for children.

We support increased access to good quality bereavement support to help people process their grief. A human rights-based Carers (Bereavement Support) (Scotland) Bill should be introduced to give carers a right to information on support and a plan to support them when their caring role ends, with a fund to support training and education, and access to Scottish Labour's new jobs and training schemes. The Carer's Allowance and Carer's Allowance Supplement should be extended from the current eight weeks to six months after their role ends with a new Post-Caring Support Payment.

Improving mental health

Psychological distress, indicating a potential psychiatric disorder, has doubled during the Covid-19 pandemic, so mental health and wellbeing should be at the heart of the recovery. There is no health without mental health, and we will embrace policies that move us towards parity of esteem between physical and mental health.

There have been many promises to improve Scotland's mental health services, but not enough action. More than 5,000 children and young people have been forced to wait more than 18 weeks to access specialist mental health treatment. The growing mental health crisis, particularly in areas of socioeconomic deprivation, requires better NHS services, but also preventive action by ending austerity, tackling poverty and providing earlier intervention.

Many of these factors disproportionately affect women, including responding to postnatal depression. To support new mothers and babies born during the pandemic we will establish Baby Clubs to encourage socialisation. We will offer an extra health visitor visit at 18 months, ensure women have adequate help to breastfeed and offer support to every woman experiencing post-natal depression. Socialisation and interactions are so essential in the early years so we will also launch a 'Babies Meet Babies' programme,

supported by appropriately trained staff and using accessible community-based facilities, to bring parents and carers together.

Currently too many patients are failed by long waiting times, with standards the government has never met. One in four young people are rejected from access to specialist care. There should be access to psychological wellbeing support for everyone who needs it and a commitment that every child and young person who needs help will get it at the first time of asking.

Scottish Labour wants to see the system reformed and the implementation of a new referral and triage service to operate a "no wrong door" approach. This would mean referrals to mental health support could come from a range of sources. This reform will ensure that no one is rejected from support and that every referral is signposted to the right services so they have the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

People also need support closer to home. One of the places people turn to for help is their GP so we want to improve the mental health offer within Primary Care. As well as strengthening links with community mental health services, by the end of the parliament Scottish Labour will ensure that every GP practice in Scotland has access to a dedicated mental health

worker who can work within practices to support patients and help reduce pressure on GPs.

Scottish Labour will transform the Mental Health Strategy, strengthening the links with social infrastructure in our communities that play a crucial role in preventing poor health. In particular, there needs to be better integration between education, social work, NHS, and the voluntary sector to focus on relationships with young people. While we welcomed the development of 24/7 mental health assessment hubs it is clear that capacity is outstripped by demand. Mental health link work should be expanded and embedded into emergency services. Every health board should have a dedicated mental health A&E where patients can be triaged and fast-tracked to the right services.

Scotland still has the highest rate of suicide in the UK, and more needs to be done to support suicide prevention programmes, including research, staff training and additional funding. We need a long-term national strategy that will embed suicide prevention within national and local policy and services.

Pilot initiatives like the Distress Brief Intervention Programme and Community Triage have been shown to have positive outcomes, and should be rolled out nationally.

NHS services also require investment. Only 8.5% of the Scottish NHS budget is spent on mental health but services are in clear need of additional funding. Scottish Labour will increase mental health spending so that it reaches 11% of the health budget, the same level as in England and Wales.

Moving from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to adult services has been identified as a potentially difficult time for patients. Continuity of care is important and transition between services requires careful management. This is why we want the development of a National Transitions Strategy, with patient advocacy at its centre, to improve outcomes for children and young people experiencing mental ill-health in their transition to adulthood.

Tackling stigma and discrimination and addressing the barriers they create is essential to improving mental health, enabling people who experience mental health problems to live life fully. We must highlight what stigma and discrimination looks and feels like, and empower people to challenge it by talking openly about their own and others' mental health without fear.

Good employers and trade unions recognise the role workplace policies can play in improving mental health, but too many workers report outdated responses. Scottish Labour will develop a new

programme to support these workplace initiatives and encourage mentally healthy work environments, especially as staff return to workplaces following the pandemic.

"When you hear Anas Sarwar talk about the NHS he knows what he's on about. He used to work in the NHS and understands a lot of the pressures. I really like he has a plan to help rebuild our health service and that's why I'm voting Scottish Labour." – ED, ANGUS

Action on social care

Social care has suffered from years of neglect under the SNP. The pandemic has highlighted the weaknesses of the current fragmented approach to social care with often tragic consequences.

Scottish Labour has long argued for a National Care Service and the end to marketisation of social care. We do not believe that huge structural change is necessary or desirable; we want to devolve power to local people, not centralise. Instead, we will create National Care Contracts to set the framework for social care services – promoting greater consistency and raising minimum standards. Crucially, the funding of care will become a national priority, while the design and delivery of care remains informed by local expertise, accountability, and community input.

In recent years the eligibility for social care has reduced and many individuals, particularly those living with care needs linked to deteriorating health conditions such as advanced dementia, have either had to pay to get all the care they need, or gone without because they cannot afford it. By ending all non-residential care charges and reversing this narrowing of eligibility we will ensure that social care support is freely available at the point of need, ending the disparity between health and social care. Self-directed support will remain at the centre, with a range of care options available for those who want to use them. Public service delivery will be increased, and a range of other providers, including cooperatives, will be available operating within the new framework.

Social care workers have continued to deliver care to vulnerable people in challenging circumstances, often at significant risk to themselves. These jobs have some of the lowest salaries in the economy, often with insecure contracts with inferior terms and conditions, leading to high turnover and vacancy rates. But it is not an accident that low pay and insecure work are overlooked or dismissed in the social care sector; with a predominantly female workforce, it is a long-standing issue of gender inequality.

Scottish Labour will ensure the work they do is better valued in future. We will establish sectoral collective bargaining arrangements for those not currently

covered to address wages, terms and conditions. We will immediately increase their wages to a minimum of £12 per hour, and work to raise it further to £15 per hour by the end of the parliament. Over the longer term the workforce needs to be treated as the skilled professionals they are, with consistent access to training and development, and proper workforce planning for the sector.

Care homes needed protection from Covid-19, but keeping relatives locked out for so long harmed the wellbeing of residents and was a cruel denial of their human rights. In the future we believe that relatives should be recognised as essential caregivers with statutory rights of access to their loved ones where necessary.

The needs of groups with protected characteristics also need to be fully reflected in the social care system. This includes offering the right support at the right time and giving people greater control over their wellbeing. For example, people with Motor Neurone Disease need fast tracked services equally and fairly across the country. We believe it is possible to shift the balance of care from expensive and needless stays in hospital to dignified care at home through a better-funded new social care structure.

Scottish Labour will also introduce a comprehensive support strategy for unpaid carers. This strategy will

be influenced by the proposals from the National Carers Organisations, including increased investment and entitlement to short breaks, access to leisure and wellbeing services, occupational health support and the provision of independent advocacy for carers of all ages. All organisations receiving government funding should become Carer Positive employers with support for education and training. Unpaid carers need flexible respite care provision, from regular weekly sessions (for example, one afternoon a week) to give them time to enjoy a break. Carers are also more at risk of losing their job in a difficult labour market. We will develop a Carers' Employment Strategy to support good work for those with caring responsibilities, and ensure it is embedded within our wider jobs and economic recovery.

Scottish Labour supported the campaign to ensure those under the age of 65 receive free personal care whenever they need it and we support increasing the amount paid in Carer's Allowance for unpaid full-time carers to create a Minimum Income Guarantee. Young carers and young adult carers must have support in place to protect them from undertaking inappropriate caring roles and allow them to make an active and informed choice about the level of care, if any, they are willing and able to provide – ultimately ensuring they have a fulfilling life alongside caring. We support developing a new cross-portfolio action plan for children and young people with caring

responsibilities, with clear actions that can deliver at pace, including employment and education support, starting with access to Scottish Labour's Summer Comeback Programme. We must also recognise the needs of the growing numbers of older carers within a new support strategy.

Scottish Labour will reinvest in social work capacity, reduce caseloads, and support staff to do much more than react to each crisis. We will strengthen workforce planning with a focus on hard-to-fill vacancies. We welcomed the recommendations of the Independent Care Review and now need to see real action on delivery so that every child grows up loved, safe, respected, and able to realise their full potential. A major challenge will be to introduce stability for children and young people in care settings. We will invest in a national adoption strategy, ensuring equality of access to adoption services across Scotland. Foster care allowances need to be reviewed and we support the introduction of a national minimum allowance for foster and kinship care, alongside further consideration of foster carers' employment status. Scottish Labour will also introduce a care endowment to address the inequality of inheritance for care experienced children and strengthen support for kinship carers. We support the 70/30 campaign to reduce the number of children who experience multiple adverse childhood experiences within Scotland by at least 70% by 2030.

Eliminating health inequalities

The persistent level of health inequality shames a nation as wealthy as Scotland. Premature mortality rates are increasing in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived. The pandemic, like other diseases, has hit the most vulnerable and poorest parts of society the hardest.

Health inequalities are about basic social justice; they are not mainly about health services but relate principally to the social determinants of health, which determine healthy or unhealthy lifestyles and behaviours. Scottish Labour will focus on health improvement measures that eliminate poverty and inequality. Services and interventions can also improve an individual or communities' health and wellbeing, enabling and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices such as the active travel plans in our transport policy.

Scottish Labour will implement a social responsibility levy on alcohol sales to support a new alcohol strategy. That plan will focus on reducing consumption through licensing, marketing restrictions, labelling and affordability, as well as improving treatment services and early intervention programmes for families with children.

During the lifetime of the SNP Government's last alcohol and drugs strategy, 15,000 people in Scotland

lost their lives due to substance misuse. The drug deaths crisis is a public health emergency, damaging individuals and communities. We need a new approach based on public health which is why Scottish Labour supported the adoption of safe consumption rooms, alongside expanded community resources that help people avoid substance misuse in the first place and improve access to residential rehabilitation and treatment.

Further action is needed on reducing smoking. We will ensure better data collection of smoking habits to develop improved coordination of smoking services with a person-centred approach. We will look at the retail density of tobacco outlets in disadvantaged areas, make the tobacco register conditional, increase tobacco-free spaces, support staff training and discourage sponsorship by health-harming commodities. We will also expand the 'incentive to quit' voucher schemes, which have been successful in targeted areas. We agree with the British Heart Foundation that the new heart disease action plan requires funding commitments to match the rhetoric. This should be focused on preventative action in the community, based on improved data with support from specialist staff.

Scottish Labour recognises that the issue of women's health has long been overlooked and under-researched; too frequently women are ignored or

dismissed. Scottish Labour supports the calls for a Mesh Charter, including the creation of a fund to support mesh-injured women having choice over where they have removal surgery, and the establishment of a Patient Safety Commissioner.

We will also create a dedicated Women's Health Fund to invest in further research, advice and services for predominantly women-specific conditions, and promote the collection of disaggregated data across the NHS. We commit to protect and reinstate women's wards in hospitals. We will ensure that all women have access to the full range of reproductive services, maintaining equality of access and provision as well as maintaining infertility treatment waiting times. We agree that screening is an essential preventative health measure. Our screening catch-up will tackle the backlogs in bowel and breast cancer screening and we are committed to the national roll out of new innovations, such as self-sampling for cervical screening. 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.

We will increase support for awareness-raising, research and treatment of predominantly male diseases like prostate cancer. We also support the development of a national programme for lung screening. Local access is also necessary, rather than

centralising services, along with expanding early detection provision. The elimination of HIV and Hepatitis C within a decade must remain the goal, backed up by evidence-based action plans that prioritise the quality of life and support for those affected.

Failing to tackle childhood obesity, particularly in disadvantaged areas, will inflict a health crisis on a whole generation. Scottish Labour recognises the social and economic drivers of obesity so we will bring forward a Health Harming Products Bill to regulate the marketing, promotion and labelling of food and drink that has little nutritional value but damages our health.

Alongside this we will place the restoration of support services for weight management, alcohol treatment and smoking cessation at the heart of the NHS's recovery from the pandemic. This should include equitable access to effective weight management services, along with greater application of evidence-based psychological interventions to change lifestyle behaviours and to manage the psychological consequences of these diseases.

A National Loneliness Strategy is meaningless if the government continues to cut local services which provide the vital social infrastructure to support communities of place and interest. Scottish Labour's approach to local government, as a partner in health improvement, will focus on building stronger

communities, and care services will play their role in this policy. We will also ensure that as many communities as possible have community-led organisations with a strong core capacity to protect and improve health and wellbeing.

Improving Scotland's health will require a shift towards valuing health and wellbeing across all of government. The initiatives to restart our health service are just the beginning. Through additional investment, a valued workforce and increased capacity will drive down waiting times, but more broadly we want all government action to come with a health impact assessment. It is crucial that every policy takes account of the need to address the root causes of inequalities and poor health so we can all live healthier for longer.