



Central Scotland and Lothians West needs change

Scotland's Central Belt is packed with vibrant communities overflowing with potential, but after 20 years of SNP government too many people across the region are being held back.

It's time for change.

Scottish Labour has a plan to fix the mess, get the basics right and build a better future for everyone from Airdrie to Almond Valley and Wishaw to Whitburn.

Making life more affordable

Scottish Labour will help people keep more of their own money in their pocket and keep everyday costs down by:

- ✔ **Committing to no income tax rate rises** for five years, with the ambition to lower taxes as we get the economy growing.
- ✔ **Widening eligibility for energy-efficiency grants**, so 3,000 more older households can access funding for home upgrades.
- ✔ **Introducing breakfast clubs in all primary schools**, helping parents get to work on time and ensuring no child starts the day hungry.
- ✔ **Cutting childcare costs for working parents** with two weeks of summer holiday clubs and increasing the value of tax free childcare to £3,000 per child.
- ✔ **Keeping down the cost of public transport**, preventing a return to peak rail fares and maintaining free bus travel for under-22s and older people.
- ✔ **Reducing tax for first time buyers**, increasing the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax relief threshold to £200,000, saving first time buyers up to £1,100 off the cost of buying a home.
- ✔ **Preventing above inflation hikes to water bills** while Scottish Water generates multi-million pound surpluses.

An NHS there when Scots need it

Scottish Labour will always defend the NHS and we will make sure it is delivering for Central Scotland and Lothians West by:

- ✔ **Reversing the decision to downgrade Wishaw neonatal unit**, stopping the plans to centralise specialist neonatal units across Scotland.
- ✔ **Driving down NHS waiting lists**, with funding following the patient so that anyone who is willing to travel can be offered treatment wherever capacity is available.
- ✔ **Ending the 8am rush for a GP appointment** and bringing back the family doctor so everyone can get a GP appointment within 48 hours when they need one.
- ✔ **Creating new neighbourhood health hubs** so people across Central Scotland and Lothians West can access all their local health services in one place.
- ✔ **Launching an emergency mental health response service**, so that people in mental health crisis get specialist NHS care, not merely a police response.
- ✔ **Catching cancer earlier** with a lung cancer screening programme and investment in new AI-enabled scanners so that waiting times targets are finally met.
- ✔ **Immediately funding additional care at home packages and step down beds**, as a first step to reducing levels of delayed discharge in hospitals.
- ✔ **Cracking down on poorly run care homes**, prioritising more regular inspections and improving transparency for residents and their families so quality services are easier to identify.
- ✔ **Ending the patchwork provision of palliative care**, working with the profession to improve clinical pathways and minimum standards of care for those at the end of life.

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Kickstarting the economy

A Scottish Labour government will unlock Central Scotland and Lothian West's huge economic potential by:

- ✓ **Abolishing the unfair business rates system**, replacing it with a new local business levy designed with business to incentivise local investment, tackle empty properties, and encourage entrepreneurship.
- ✓ **Supporting vibrant high streets and town centres**, ensuring online retailers and large distribution warehouses pay their fair share, and appointing a Chief Assessor so there is true accountability over valuations.
- ✓ **Supporting transition plans for key industrial sites**, such as Grangemouth, working with businesses, local partners and the UK Government to attract new industry and secure a viable industrial future for these areas.
- ✓ **Improving train travel across Central Scotland and Lothians West**, working to deliver integrated smart ticketing and more frequent Glasgow-Edinburgh express services to boost capacity and cut journey times.
- ✓ **Embed social and economic value weighting into public contracts**, delivering long overdue reforms to Scottish procurement so laws government spending is used to back Scottish jobs and industry.
- ✓ **Speeding up planning decisions**, transforming the planning hub into a national planning agency and reforming planning rules to take account of economic potential.

Developing skills and creating good jobs

Scottish Labour will transform the skills system so that it works for people and business by:

- ✓ **Guaranteeing an apprenticeship place for every qualified applicant**, with the creation of 9,000 additional apprenticeships across Scotland.
- ✓ **Maintaining free tuition for Scotland's undergraduates**, ensuring that attending university can still be an aspiration for all.
- ✓ **Creating a regional Apprenticeship Centre of Excellence** so growing industries have the pipeline of cutting-edge skills they need.
- ✓ **Creating a Digital Skills Passport** helping people to move between jobs and careers.
- ✓ **Launching a regional employability hub** to deliver a single front door into the skills system for anyone who wants to find work or retrain to boost their earnings.
- ✓ **Developing short reskilling courses**, tailored to skills gaps in the local economy and delivered by local colleges.
- ✓ **Protecting workers from assault**, bringing in stronger sentences for those who attack people in the course of their work.

Setting our young people up to succeed

Scottish Labour will restore excellence and equity in our education system once again by:

- ✓ **Banning mobile phones in classrooms** so that schools are safe and calm places for learning once again.
- ✓ **Giving pupils in Central Scotland and Lothians West more 1:1 support**, as part of plans to recruit 1,500 more classroom assistants across the country.
- ✓ **Implementing an education recovery programme**, with specialist literacy and numeracy teachers to help children who have fallen the furthest behind.
- ✓ **Industry work placements for secondary school pupils** with local employers and public services across Central Scotland and Lothians West.
- ✓ **Providing jobs for teachers**, providing greater certainty with permanent contracts and jobs.
- ✓ **Increasing staff capacity in ASN classrooms**, with 300 of our new pupil support assistants based in specialist ASN units or schools.

Stronger communities

Scottish Labour will work with local people to improve local service and make Central Scotland and Lothians West a great place to live by:

- ✓ **Fixing the potholes in Central Scotland and Lothian West**, repairing roads with a national £350m pothole fund.
- ✓ **Delivering fair funding for local services**, agreeing a new funding formula for local government in Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and West Lothian.
- ✓ **Giving people in Central Scotland and Lothians West a say over service closures**, requiring councils to consult whenever they plan to shut local libraries, sports and leisure facilities.
- ✓ **Protecting the status of denominational schools**, recognising the high quality education and choice they offer pupils and parents.
- ✓ **Redefining community benefit**, so funds derived from local energy projects deliver tangible, long-term results for communities, and acting to boost more community owned energy projects.

A safer Scotland

Scottish Labour will restore security and make our neighbourhoods safe again by:

- ✓ **Returning police officers back to the front line** and giving every council ward in the region a named community and crime prevention officer.
- ✓ **Increasing the value of Antisocial Behaviour Fines**, meaning those who make communities feel less safe can face fines of up to £500.

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- ✔ **Legislating for tougher regulation on the sale of all knives**, to prevent shoplifting.
- ✔ **Crushing illegal e-bikes**, using drone technology to track and trace unlicensed bikes for seizure.
- ✔ **Restoring the Cashback for Communities Youth Work Fund**, with £1m dedicated to funding local approaches to youth work.
- ✔ **Including pyrotechnics in football banning orders**, closing a gap in the law and ensuring everyone can enjoy games without disorder.
- ✔ **Continuing funding for Rape Crisis and Women's Aid**, ensuring resources are delivered to local services which support victims.

Homes for all

As part of Scottish Labour's plans to build 125,000 homes and end the housing emergency, in Central Scotland and Lothians West we will:

- ✔ **Fix the broken housing market**, with thousands of new affordable homes to drive down housing waiting lists and reduce rents.
- ✔ **Help renters to save for a deposit**, with a quarter of new mid-market rent houses set aside for working families who are saving to buy their own home.
- ✔ **Eradicate rough sleeping with an Ending Homelessness Unit** to drive action across government.
- ✔ **Establish a regional Housing Development Trust** with responsibility for delivering affordable housing targets.
- ✔ **Grant homeowners more control over factoring**, with higher penalties when factors breach their obligations and making it easier for residents to end contracts.
- ✔ **Improve tenement maintenance arrangements**, expediting progress on reform recommendations.

Protecting our natural environment

Scottish Labour will help everyone to play their part in making Central Scotland and Lothians West a greener and healthier place to live by:

- ✔ **Creating a warm homes programme**, with one-stop centres in communities offering advice on new technologies, and installation of energy efficiency measures.
- ✔ **Increasing monitoring of sewage overflows**, boosting coverage to match levels elsewhere in the UK, to ensure that rivers such as the Almond, Avon and Carron can be protected for generations to come.

- ✔ **Tackling littering and waste from drinks' containers**, rolling out the deposit return scheme.
- ✔ **Rewarding farmers for nature-friendly practices**, incentivising nature restoration and recognising the environmental contributions already made by Scotland's farmers.

A government that works for you

Scottish Labour will end the culture of secrecy and restore respect for taxpayers' money by:

- ✔ **Ending government waste by cutting a third of quangos** to improve delivery and value for public money.
- ✔ **Publishing all government files relating to the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital** and other recent SNP scandals.
- ✔ **Implementing the right of recall**, so people in Central Scotland and Lothians West have the right to replace MSPs who do not uphold public standards.
- ✔ **Passing a Local Democracy Act**, to push power out of Holyrood and give people in Central Scotland and Lothians West more control over public services.

An outward looking country

Scottish Labour will promote Brand Scotland and all that Central Scotland and Lothians West has to offer has to offer around the world by:

- ✔ **Championing the development of specialist hospitality qualifications**, working with business schools and colleges to close critical skills gaps and build clear, respected career pathways across the industry.
- ✔ **Driving the expansion of international air routes**, with a route development fund that supports Scottish airports.
- ✔ **Protecting Scotland's historic assets, reforming Historic Environment Scotland so it is fit for purpose** and ensuring funding is properly used to maintain Scottish sites.

This election is a straight choice between more of the same with the SNP or a government ready to build a better future with Scottish Labour.

The SNP has had 20 years in charge; they don't deserve another five.

On May 7, vote Scottish Labour on both votes for the change Scotland needs.