



Edinburgh and Lothians East need change

Edinburgh and Lothians East have huge potential, but after 20 years of SNP government too many people feel they 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 Edinburgh and Lothians East.

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 the people living in Edinburgh and Lothians East by:

- ✔ **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 Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian 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 a specialist NHS care, not merely a police response.
- ✔ **Protecting services in underserved areas**, working with GPs to secure provision and incentivising newly qualified dentists to work in underserved areas.
- ✔ **Delivering safe maternity services**, with a national plan to ensure that women can access quality maternity care no matter where they live.
- ✔ **Catching cancer earlier**, with a modernised 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.
- ✔ **End 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

Edinburgh and Lothians East are diverse and vibrant economic powerhouses. A Scottish Labour government will unlock the huge economic potential of the region 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.
- ✔ **Improving intercity travel**, creating a fast rail corridor linking Scotland's cities with electrified trains and a more frequent Glasgow-Edinburgh express service to boost capacity and cut journey times.
- ✔ **Prioritising rural-specific industries within our industrial strategy**, ensuring that government interventions are designed for both rural and urban areas from inception.
- ✔ **Speeding up planning decisions**, transforming the planning hub into a national planning agency and reforming planning rules to take account of economic potential.
- ✔ **Prioritising business scale-up in government funding**, shifting enterprise support towards loans focused on delivering growth and improving business productivity.
- ✔ **Removing the ideological block on new nuclear energy**, so Scotland benefits from new investment, jobs and zero-carbon energy.
- ✔ **Increasing Scotland's spin out rate to match the UK average**, with dedicated funding to encourage collaboration between business and university researchers.

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.
- ✔ **Create an Apprenticeship Centre of Excellence in Edinburgh** 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 regional employability hubs**, 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 across Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian 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.
- ✔ **Guaranteeing industry work placements for every secondary school pupil** with local employers, public services, and in growing industries.
- ✔ **Creating new Skills for Schools programme** which demonstrates the range of career possibilities in industry.
- ✔ **Providing jobs for teachers**, providing greater certainty with permanent contracts and jobs.
- ✔ **Increased 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 services and make Edinburgh and Lothians East great places to live by:

- ✔ **Fixing the potholes in Edinburgh and Lothians East**, repairing roads with a national £350m pothole fund.
- ✔ **Delivering fair funding for local services**, agreeing a new funding formula for local government in City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian.
- ✔ **Giving people in Edinburgh and Lothians East a say over service closures**, requiring councils to consult whenever they plan to shut local libraries, sports and leisure facilities.
- ✔ **Supporting vibrant high streets and town centres**, ensuring online retailers and large distribution warehouses pay their fair share of business rates and levies.
- ✔ **Accelerating internet connectivity**, prioritising the deployment of full-fibre broadband and working with the mobile network operators to roll-out 5G in underserved areas.
- ✔ **Piloting a creative entrepreneur's allowance**, supporting up to 1,000 creatives and artists who have a commercial business plan with their living costs as they establish their enterprise.

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A safer Scotland

Scottish Labour will restore security and make neighbourhoods in Edinburgh and Lothians East safe again by:

- ✔ **Returning police officers back to the front line** and giving every neighbourhood 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.
- ✔ **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.
- ✔ **Removing free bus passes** from those who carry out antisocial behaviour.
- ✔ **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 Edinburgh and Lothians East 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.
- ✔ **Tackle the scale of empty and second homes**, closing tax loopholes and supporting councils to buy neglected and empty properties that blight neighbourhoods.

Protecting our natural environment

One of Scotland's greatest assets is our land and natural environment. Scottish Labour will take the action needed to make the Edinburgh and Lothians East 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.
- ✔ **Introducing a new Marine Plan**, so there is clarity for all industries within Scottish waters and a commitment to develop 40GW in offshore wind by 2040.
- ✔ **Establishing a Marine Recovery Fund**, funded through developer contributions, to deliver strategic marine and nature recovery.
- ✔ **Rewarding farmers for nature-friendly practices**, incentivising nature restoration and recognising the environmental contributions already made by Scotland's farmers.
- ✔ **Increasing monitoring of sewage overflows**, boosting coverage to match levels elsewhere in the UK.
- ✔ **Tackling littering and waste from drinks' containers**, rolling out the deposit return scheme.

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 Salmond Inquiry** and other recent SNP scandals.
- ✔ **Implementing the right of recall**, so people in Edinburgh and Lothians East 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 the Edinburgh and Lothians East more control over public services and the right to elect a regional mayor.

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An outward looking country

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

- ✓ **Establishing a Major Events Bureau**, strengthening the Edinburgh festivals and positioning venues across Scotland as leading destinations for worldclass sport, culture, and international conferences.
- ✓ **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 our 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.