

SCOTLAND NEEDS CHANGE

Scottish Labour's Plan

- **Cut NHS wait times with funding following the patient**
- **End the 8am rush for a GP appointment**
- **Bring back the family doctor**
- **New technology in our NHS with an NHS app and AI scanners**
- **A mental health emergency service**
- **Top up tax free childcare and two weeks of summer holiday clubs**
- **Breakfast clubs in every school**
- **Ban mobile phones in classrooms**
- **2,000 Education Recovery teachers and 1,500 more classroom assistants**
- **9,000 new apprenticeships to deliver an apprenticeship guarantee**
- **Abolish the unfair business rates system**
- **End the block on clean nuclear energy**
- **Deliver the Glasgow airport rail link**

- **Community police officers for every neighbourhood**
- **A £350m potholes fund to fix the roads**
- **Fair funding for local communities**
- **125,000 new homes to fix the broken housing market**
- **End government waste and cut a third of quangos**
- **A right to recall MSPs**
- **More support for people trying to buy their own home**

Leader's foreword

Scotland is an amazing country with huge potential, but after 20 years of SNP government too many people feel our country is being held back.

They see it in our NHS, in soaring waiting lists and the struggle to get a GP appointment. They see it in schools under pressure, in town centres that have been hollowed out, in young people priced out of home ownership, and in families who work hard but feel they are getting nowhere.

Scotland needs change.

That's what I hear from people in communities across our great country. I hear and share the frustration of the hard-working majority, who are ambitious for their families, their communities, and for Scotland, but who are tired of broken promises and excuses. I understand why people are angry: they feel that they are paying more and getting less and that after all these years, the basics are still not

being delivered. That is why it is time for change.

Change that will deliver a new government for Scotland, one that is focused on the priorities of the Scottish people not its own agenda. A government that respects your money, values your work, and is determined to make life better for you and your family.

That is why I am standing to be First Minister. To fix the mess. To get the basics right. And to build a better future for Scotland.

This manifesto is built on that promise.

It is a plan to rebuild our NHS and put patients first by cutting waiting times, ending the 8am rush for a GP, and bringing back the family doctor. It is a plan to make life more affordable by cutting childcare costs, building more homes, and ending government waste. It is a plan to give every child the best start, with breakfast clubs, better support in the classroom, and a renewed focus on recovery and standards. And it is a plan to grow our

economy, create skilled jobs, back Scottish industry, and give young people the chance to build a future here at home.

Above all, it is a plan to restore hope.

Because I believe Scotland's best days lie ahead of us. And I believe we build that better future not by dividing our communities, but by bringing them together in common purpose to deliver something better for our country.

We are a country of talent, compassion, innovation and ambition. We have everything we need to succeed except a government prepared to match the potential of the Scottish people.

That is the change Scotland needs.

A Scottish Labour government will be relentless in the service of the hard-working majority. It will focus on delivery, not distraction. It will put country before party and the interests of the people of Scotland first.

This election is a choice between more of the same managed decline or change and a better future for our country.

It's a choice between the politics of division or the politics of hope.

It's a choice between stale, tired leadership that hides behind excuses, or new leadership, energy and ideas that focuses on delivering for Scotland.

Most importantly of all it is our chance, for the first time in a generation, to vote for and deliver the change that Scotland so desperately needs.

My promise to you is that if you put your trust in me on May 7, I will work tirelessly to make that better future for Scotland a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anas Sarwar', with a stylized, cursive script.

Anas Sarwar,
Leader of the Scottish Labour Party

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Making life more affordable

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- **Reducing tax for first time home buyers, saving them up to £1,100.**
- **Widening eligibility for energy-efficiency grants, so 3,000 more older households can access funding for home upgrades and rural home grants are worth £500 more.**
- **Tackling school meal debt and reviewing free school meal thresholds in secondary school.**

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- **Introducing breakfast clubs in all primary schools so 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.**

- **Committing to no income tax rate rises for five years, with the ambition to lower taxes as we get the economy growing.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Making sure every young person leaves school with a bank account.**
- **Creating Family Network hubs, based on Sure Start principles, to connect families with the support they need.**
- **Establishing a Parent Works Scheme, with training and support to help parents find well-paid jobs and help lift families out of poverty.**
- **Improving the childcare system, with funding following the child so that care is accessible and available for every family.**

The people of Scotland are full of aspiration for themselves and their families. They want to work hard and get on in life, but these days it can feel more difficult than ever to make ends meet. As costs rise and the SNP hike Scottish taxes, people are paying more but feel like they are getting less in return. In difficult financial times we need to support each other and government should enable that collective effort. Yet, ending poverty cannot be achieved through welfare alone, it requires action across every area of government. Scottish Labour will help people who are struggling with the cost of living and act to break the cycle of poverty. Together we can build a more stable future where hard work finally pays off once again.

CUTTING COSTS FOR HOUSEHOLDS

In recent years, the increased cost of living has been felt by every household. Scottish Labour will help people keep more of

their own money in their pocket and keep everyday costs down by:

- **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.
- **Helping households save on rent,** building over 20,000 mid-market rent homes which save tenants an average of £2,700 a year off market rents and setting aside 5,000 homes for those who want to save for a mortgage deposit.
- **Widening eligibility for energy-efficiency support,** dropping the age threshold for the Warmer Homes Scotland scheme to 70 and increasing rural grant uplifts by £500.
- **Boosting uptake of the Warm Homes Discount,** increasing automatic roll out so all 500,000 households who are eligible get £150 off their energy bills.
- **Keeping down the cost of public transport,** preventing a return to peak

rail fares, maintaining free bus travel for under-22s and older people, and delivering a plan to place local bus services under public control.

- **Preventing above inflation hikes to water bills** while Scottish Water generates multi-million pound surpluses and restricting excessive executive bonuses.
- **Not increasing the rates of income tax** for the whole five years of the next Parliament, with the ambition to lower the tax burden the SNP has placed on Scots as we get the economy growing once again.

HELPING FAMILIES TO THRIVE

Across the country, parents are striving to give their children the best start in life. They need a government that backs them to succeed but the majority of children in poverty in Scotland live with a parent in work. To help families, Scottish Labour will:

- **Introduce breakfast clubs in all primary schools**, helping parents get

to work on time and ensuring no child starts the day hungry.

- **Reduce the costs of childcare for working parents**, providing two weeks of funded holiday clubs during the summer and increasing the value of tax free childcare so it is worth £3,000 per child.
- **Improve the flexibility of the childcare system**, with funding following the child, support for childminders and action to ensure care is accessible for single parent families, parents who work shifts, and children with additional support needs.
- **Maintain the Scottish Child Payment** and increase it to £40 a week for children under one to help low income families at the start of a child's life.
- **Establish a Parent Works Scheme**, funding colleges to deliver dedicated training and employment support for parents who are unemployed or in low paid work, so they can fill local skills gaps, boost their household incomes

and help lift children out of poverty.

- **Create Family Network hubs in primary schools**, based on Sure Start principles. These hubs will have family coordinators to help families connect with the support they need, be it advice on money and benefits, housing, childcare, parenting and employment support.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

Periods of financial crisis can happen in anyone's life, but at these moments the right support is crucial to prevent people becoming trapped in cycles of debt or poverty. Scottish Labour will ensure help is available for anyone who faces financial insecurity by:

- **Standardising delivery of the Scottish Welfare Fund**, to ensure it is targeted towards preventing homelessness, end the postcode lottery of access and improve integration with local money advice services.

- **Protecting people with public debt,** working with public sector stakeholders to implement new standards and protections so no one is pushed into poverty by public sector debt collection.
- **Tackling school meal debt,** maintaining write off funds and reviewing the thresholds for free school meals in secondary schools so all those in need can access a nutritious and warm school meal.
- **Increasing access to free internet spaces,** expanding free mobile SIM programmes and boosting uptake of broadband social tariffs to reduce digital exclusion.
- **Supporting the growth of credit unions and building societies,** so there are low cost options available to those who need to access financial advice and credit.

BUILDING FINANCIAL SECURITY

Financial stability is about more than preventing poverty. We want a Scotland where everyone is equipped and empowered to access good banking services and build resilient finances. Scottish Labour will deliver a financial inclusion and wellbeing strategy that will:

- **Properly fund financial inclusion,** redirecting at least £2m of dormant asset funding into money advice services.
- **Work with schools to deliver financial literacy classes** and ensure every young person leaves school with a bank account.
- **Improve access to banking hubs,** working with the banking sector to help anyone who needs reliable access to cash and banking services.
- **Prioritise the efficiency and effectiveness of Social Security Scotland,** ensuring that it delivers for those who rely on payments and

resources are reaching those most in need.

- **Help with transitions into work,** ensuring that Scotland's social security system removes barriers for people who want to take up paid work or increase their hours.
- **Increase funding for consumer advice charities,** abolishing Consumer Scotland and redirecting the funding to reduce duplication of work.

Money is tight for most parents and made tighter by the astronomical cost of childcare. I'm pleased Scottish Labour will support working parents and cut the cost of childcare.

Kayleigh Quinn, mum of two children

The rising cost of living impacts everyone so any help at all with bills is welcome. Making energy costs cheaper and homes warmer has to be a priority.

Maureen Pollock, retired hospital catering manager

An NHS there when Scots need it

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- **Driving down NHS waiting lists, using capacity wherever it is available.**
- **Tackling delayed discharge, with 300 step-down beds in care homes and 1,000 more care at home packages.**
- **Legislating for Milly's Law to end the culture of cover-up and get the truth for families.**
- **Expanding residential rehab to tackle the drugs death crisis.**

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- **Ending the 8am rush for a GP appointment and bringing back the family doctor.**

- **Delivering £15 per hour for social care workers, working to improve terms and conditions in the sector.**
- **Establishing a 10-year workforce plan, with a train here, stay here policy for new graduates.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Investing in modern AI scanners and equipment to detect cancer early.**
- **Speeding up the NHS app so patients can order repeat prescriptions and book appointments on their smartphone.**
- **Creating a new emergency mental health response service so that people in mental health crisis get NHS care, not a police response.**
- **Streamlining the number of NHS boards to cut bureaucracy and direct resources to the frontline.**

Looking after our health is key to the flourishing and prosperity of our nation. The NHS should be there for us when we need it, but without action the core principles upon which Labour first founded the NHS – universally available and free at the point of need – are at risk in Scotland today. Scottish Labour will always defend the NHS, but we also know that it cannot afford to stand still if it is to keep delivering for the next generation. That is why we will act to drive down waiting lists and modernise Scotland’s health service.

TACKLING THE WAITING LIST BACKLOG

Driving down the huge waiting list backlog will be a day one priority for a Scottish Labour government. We will:

- **Break down barriers between health boards**, so that any patient who has waited too long, and who is willing to travel elsewhere in Scotland or the UK, can be offered appointments and

treatment in health boards with space to treat them.

- **Reform NHS funding so that funding follows the patient.** Health boards will be incentivised to maximise their capacity and improve their productivity as they will only be paid for the work they carry out.
- **Use all available capacity no matter where it is,** even if that is elsewhere in the UK or it means purchasing capacity from the independent sector on a short-term basis. Our priority will be to prevent patients having to pay out of pocket for treatment they should get on the NHS.
- **End “corridor care” and get A&E waits down to under 4 hours,** by improving patient flow through hospital, enhancing acute frailty services and improving access to GP and NHS 24 advice so patients do not have to resort to attending A&E.
- **Speed up ambulance response times,** introducing a 45 minute target for

ambulance turnarounds to prevent vehicles being stuck in queues outside hospitals.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO GOOD LOCAL CARE

Excellent primary care is crucial to improving Scotland's health so Scottish Labour will make it easier for people to get treatment and health advice when they need it by:

- **Ending the 8am rush for a GP appointment and delivering online booking of GP appointments** with a new GP contract, which we will start negotiations on within the first 100 days of a Scottish Labour government.
- **Bringing back the family doctor to deliver continuity of care and guarantee a GP appointment within 48 hours** for everyone who needs one.
- **Expanding the role of community pharmacy, optometry and audiology** in delivering advice and treatment for common conditions so people can get

help more quickly and through walk-in facilities.

- **Protect services in under-served areas**, working with GPs to secure provision in rural and Deep End practices.
- **Creating new neighbourhood health hubs** that co-locate general practice, pharmacy, dentistry, community health, physiotherapy, social care and other health services in the one place. Replacement of older GP surgery buildings will follow this model so that patients have better access to local services as the estate is modernised.

Scottish Labour's vision for the future of the NHS will also see patients able to access the best quality specialist care, while everyday health services are brought closer to communities. We will:

- **Shift resources from hospitals into local communities**, so that patients can access more diagnostic tests and

outpatient treatment closer to home in our neighbourhood health hubs.

- **Establish a virtual hospital** that will allow patients to attend outpatient consultations and follow up appointments online. This will reduce the need for patients to take extra time off work or travel long distances to speak to a specialist.
- **Allow GPs and professionals to refer patients directly for specialist tests or services** and, where appropriate, allow patients to self-refer.
- **Collaborate across the UK** to ensure that patients can access specialist treatment centres and cutting-edge clinical trials elsewhere in the UK.
- **Improve coordination of services for veterans**, promoting the GP Armed Forces and Veterans Recognition Scheme and expanding Veterans' First Point Services.

CREATING A MODERN NHS

For too long Scotland's NHS has remained stuck in the analogue age. Scottish Labour will realise the benefits of modern technology and digital working by:

- **Speeding up the roll out of an NHS app and patient portal** so that it is available in every health board within the first 100 days.
- **Prioritising the delivery of e-prescribing** and ensure the new app delivers repeat prescription ordering and online booking of appointments within 12 months.
- **Creating a single patient record** which both patients and medical professionals can view to improve communications and continuity of care, and ensure patients no longer have to explain their treatments and conditions from scratch in new settings.
- **Expanding the NHS-approved use of wearable technology** so that patients are empowered to monitor their conditions and take action without

needing to attend the GP. This will also improve the care clinicians can provide their patients by utilising real-time data.

- **Prioritising investment in new technology**, investing in new AI-enabled MRI and CT scanners to help detect cancer early with a new NHS infrastructure plan.

Scotland has world class universities, research facilities and medical expertise from which patients should be benefitting. Scottish Labour will ensure that Scots are able to access the cutting edge of research and treatments by:

- **Ensuring NHS consultants have dedicated research time**, to support the development of innovations and research projects within Scotland. This will also form part of our plans to help retain experienced staff for longer.
- **Modernising medical data systems**, so that anonymised health data can be safely used for large scale research

and analytics to develop new clinical interventions and treatments.

- **Securing Scotland's participation in large scale clinical trials**, working with the UK Government to ensure Scottish patients do not miss out on new treatments.
- **Supporting university R&D and health spin outs** with our new approach to business support and encouraging entrepreneurialism in Scottish universities.
- **Review the medicines approval and procurement processes**, to reduce unnecessary delays to approvals and improve access to new medicines.

REDUCING WASTE AND BUREAUCRACY

Scotland's NHS has more staff and more funding than ever before but is paradoxically delivering less care. A population of five and half million people does not need over 50 health and social care bodies or quangos to deliver healthcare. Scottish Labour will cut

the bureaucracy and SNP waste that is holding back our health service by:

- **Reducing the number of territorial boards to three**, cutting down on the number of chief executives and directors. Instead, resources will be pushed down to local communities with reformed health and care partnerships that give local people a greater say over their local services.
- **Streamlining the number of special NHS boards.** A review of their activities will remove duplication and reduce the number down to no more than five.
- **Taking a “One Scotland” approach when it comes to NHS procurement and new innovations** to reduce variation between regions and speed up the adoption of new technologies and medications.
- **Introducing productivity metrics for the NHS**, following examples elsewhere in the UK to help identify opportunities to improve service delivery.

Patients and their loved ones turn to the NHS when they are at their most vulnerable and so trust is crucial. Scots deserve the best levels of care so Scottish Labour will ensure that delivering better experiences and outcomes for patients is once again placed at the heart of the health service. To create this culture, we will:

- **Tackle the scale of delayed discharge**, starting with 300 step-down beds in care homes so people can leave hospital while still waiting for a care package. We will also improve data collection around the causes of delays and explore legislative change that would improve the process for those without capacity.
- **Establish a new National Clinical Council** that will directly advise Scottish Government Ministers on the adoption of reforms and innovations to improve patient outcomes.
- **Legislate for Milly's Law to end the culture of cover-up**, establishing an independent public advocate who can

act on behalf of bereaved families and investigate incidents, so that families get the truth when things go wrong.

SUPPORTING OUR NHS WORKFORCE

The NHS's skilled and experienced workforce are its most valuable resource. Scottish Labour will end the scandal of poor workforce planning which sees high vacancy rates while nurses and doctors struggle to find jobs and training places. We will deliver proper workforce planning with:

- **Flexible working arrangements** to help retain staff and allow experienced staff to stay in work for longer.
- **A 10-year workforce plan** that links university places to training posts, jobs and career development. Designed alongside the professions and with our new National Clinical Council, it will ensure that staff can have fulfilling careers and the health service has the safe staffing that it needs.
- **A new NHS work requirement for future Scottish medical, dental and nursing**

students so that those who are funded to train in Scotland must work for at least five years in Scotland's NHS or social care, or pay back their tuition and bursaries.

- **Incentives in our new GP contract** to attract new trainees to primary care and expand the GP and ripmacy care workforce in places with high vacancy rates.

PROTECTING WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women's health has long been overlooked and too frequently women are ignored or dismissed when they raise their concerns. It is time for this to change and for women's health to be given the priority it deserves. To improve health care for women, Scottish Labour will:

- **Deliver safe maternity services in every part of the country**, with a national plan to drive improvements where services have fallen short and ensure that women can access quality maternity care no matter where they live.

- **Guarantee support for new families,** training and recruiting the health visitors needed to provide home visits between pre-birth and a child turning five.
- **Reverse the decision to downgrade Wishaw neonatal unit,** pausing the plans to centralise specialist neonatal units across Scotland, and commissioning a new review of services.
- **Recommit the NHS to delivering single sex wards on the basis of biological sex,** and ensuring patients can request same sex provision wherever possible.
- **Tackle long waits for gynaecological procedures,** improving speed of access to colposcopies, laparoscopies and hysterectomies, and diagnosing endometriosis faster.
- **Provide menopause clinics in every health board region,** so women can access the support, advice and medical interventions they need.

- **Protect women's reproductive rights**, ensuring that they are able to access the full range of reproductive services, no matter where they live.

SUPPORTING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Scottish Labour believes it is time for mental health services to be given the parity of esteem they deserve. We will ensure services are able to meet demand with:

- **A new emergency mental health response service**, staffed by specially trained paramedics, nurses and mental health professionals so that people in mental health crisis get specialist NHS care, not merely a police response.
- **A new national neurodevelopmental pathway** so that neurodivergent people can get the right support instead of being stuck on inappropriate mental health waiting lists.
- **Community mental health professionals in GP surgeries**, so that patients can get immediate

support rather than face long waits for specialist care as their only option.

- **Improved access to self-referral pathways**, by expanding the use of evidence-based digital therapies and exploring the scale up of community walk in services.
- **Better support for children and young people on CAMHS waiting lists**, with a dedicated Community Link Worker service in all CAMHS teams, to create wraparound support from the point of referral so kids don't have to wait for the help they need.
- **More NHS funding spent on mental health**, so that it matches proportions spent elsewhere in the UK.

RESTORING ACCESS TO NHS DENTISTRY

Scottish Labour will restore NHS dentistry and end the dental deserts across the country by:

- **Incentivising newly qualified dentists** to work in underserved and deprived

areas as part of a wider review of public service dentistry.

- **Increasing the number of dental therapists** as part of a dental workforce plan to enable patients to be seen more quickly for routine check-ups and treatments.
- **Requiring Scottish dental students to work in the NHS for five years** or pay back their tuition and bursaries.
- **Double the coverage of Childsmile**, building on its success by expanding the toothbrushing programme to Primary 3 and Primary 4 in targeted schools.
- **Improving access to dental health support workers** within deprived areas and for families in need of support.

HELPING PEOPLE TO LIVE WELL

For too long the NHS has operated as a sickness service, but there is so much more we can do to help people to live healthier lives for longer. To help the

increasing number of people living with long-term and chronic conditions, Scottish Labour will:

- **Improve access to outpatient services**, making use of new technology for monitoring, expanding virtual clinics, and incentivising GPs to run chronic condition clinics through the new contract.
- **Develop a cardiology community service** and expand telemonitoring of blood pressure in the community.
- **Improve services for patients with long covid and ME**, with specialist clinics and pathways.
- **Deliver a right to rehab** so that those recovering from surgery and living with long-term conditions can maintain their health and mobility for as long as possible.
- **Prioritise the delivery of a 24/7 thrombectomy service** so that every patient in Scotland can access the best possible stroke treatment.

- **Deliver health checks for people with learning disabilities**, improving uptake and delivering on the commitment to people with learning disabilities across the country.

PROMOTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Many illnesses that place demand on the NHS and reduce an individual's quality of life are preventable. Scottish Labour will improve public health interventions by:

- **Ending new cases of HIV in Scotland by 2030**, with opt-out testing in A&E departments in areas of high prevalence, online prevention services and awareness campaigns to tackle stigma and encourage uptake of HIV treatment and care.
- **Working with supermarkets to promote healthy food promotions** and reduce sales of food with no nutritional value.
- **Expanding smoking cessation programmes**, preventing the promotion of vaping to non-smokers

and young people, and gathering more robust data on the rate of young people taking up smoking and vaping.

- **Extending smoke-free zones**, around schools and playgrounds taking similar measures to those applied to hospitals.
- **Exploring options to expand the safe and appropriate prescription of anti-obesity injections**, building on the clinical trials already underway in Scotland.
- **Establishing a vaccine promotion campaign** to drive up vaccination rates in children and adults at risk over winter.

CATCHING AND TREATING CANCER EARLY

When people do become sick, it is crucial that they can access treatment and care as quickly as possible. Early diagnosis is essential to improve survival rates, especially when it comes to cancer but delays to diagnosis persist. Scottish Labour will ensure the NHS meets its cancer waiting standards with:

- **Investment in new AI-enabled scanners and the diagnostic workforce**, upgrading NHS Scotland's outdated infrastructure and helping to catch cancer earlier so that Scotland finally hits the 62 day referral target.
- **National coverage of Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Services**, so that patients in every health board area can be referred on to a rapid diagnostic pathway to reduce unnecessary appointments.
- **Modernised screening programmes**, rolling out lung cancer screening, cervical self-sampling, and a prostate screening pilot. We will also deliver more targeted programmes in deprived areas and improved availability out of hours.
- **A personalised care plan for every cancer patient**, so that every patient has clarity about their treatment and a single point of non-clinical contact to turn to for support throughout their patient journey.

ADDRESSING SCOTLAND'S SUBSTANCE MISUSE CRISIS

Despite being declared an emergency, Scotland's drug and alcohol deaths crisis is costing thousands of lives every year. Scottish Labour will act with the urgency needed by:

- **Investing in alcohol and substance misuse recovery services**, maintaining national funding and recouping the profits from minimum unit pricing from large retailers to fund frontline rehabilitation services.
- **Simplifying oversight of substance misuse services**, reviewing the effectiveness of alcohol and drug partnerships and ensuring funding decisions are informed by voices from the frontline of rehabilitation and harm reduction services.
- **Creating alcohol care teams**, working in the hospitals with the highest alcohol-related admissions to provide interventions and support patients and families living with alcohol misuse.

- **Expanding residential rehab**, ensuring it is available to all those who wish to access these services and gathering better data on patient journeys through rehabilitation.
- **Expanding the availability of community rehabilitation programmes**, with dedicated funding for peer support programmes and aftercare for individuals completing residential rehabilitation programmes.
- **Reviewing the impact of the Thistle safe consumption pilot**, including the consequences for the surrounding area and ensuring any provision is evidence based.
- **Rolling out drug checking services**, to protect users against the rise of potent synthetics.

IMPROVING END OF LIFE CARE

Too many people are reaching the end of life without the support they need.

Compassionate and well-planned palliative services give patients comfort

and care when they are terminally ill.
Scottish Labour will:

- **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.
- **Improve palliative care training**, for staff in social care and health services, including NHS 24, so patients and families get the advice and support they need.
- **Better coordinated care in the community**, with family GPs delivering improved continuity of care.
- **Deliver parity of pay for hospice-based doctors and nurses**, with a long-term sustainable funding model for hospices and end of life care

VALUING SOCIAL CARE

Social care is crucial for the dignity of our family, friends and neighbours. When we get social care services right, it also

relieves the pressure on our NHS. Scottish Labour will:

- **Work in partnership with the sector to create a National Care Service worthy of the name**, creating consistent standards of quality and service delivery everywhere across the country.
- **Immediately fund an additional 1,000 care at home packages and 300 step down beds**, as a first step to reducing levels of delayed discharge in hospitals.
- **Recognise the role of unpaid carers**, improving access to respite and support for them to manage their own health and wellbeing.
- **Removing non-residential care charges**, so people are not penalised financially for needing help to live at home independently.
- **Crack 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.

- **Deliver £15 per hour as a minimum pay for care workers**, working with trade unions to improve terms and conditions through collective pay bargaining in the sector.
- **Create clear career pathways for carers**, with professional development, registration and training so that care workers are given the respect their work deserves.

As a surgeon in the NHS for over 30 years, I want to see a change of government so we can fix our health service and drive down waiting lists.

Mike McKirdy, retired NHS surgeon

Mental health shouldn't be treated as an 'add-on' or secondary issue, it needs to be given parity with other services and the investment and reform needed to meet increasing demand.

Amy Jarvie, nurse

It's devastating when loved ones don't get the care they should. Cracking down on poorly run care homes, with more inspections and improved transparency for residents and their families is a very welcome step.

Kainde Manji, dementia policy expert

Kickstarting the economy

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- **Removing the ideological block on new nuclear energy, so Scotland benefits from new investment, jobs and zero-carbon energy.**
- **Overhauling the planning system, to speed up applications and take account of projects' economic potential.**
- **Reforming procurement rules so we build and buy more in Scotland and public money supports local jobs.**

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- **Creating a single industrial strategy in partnership with business, to give clarity to investors and business owners.**

- **Modernising Scotland's agricultural support system so that it is fit for purpose and fairer for all.**
- **Streamlining our economic agencies to end duplication and focus them on scaling up Scottish businesses.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Replacing the unfair business rates, to incentivise local investment, support vibrant town centres, and make sure online giants pay their fair share.**
- **Improve intercity travel, by planning a fast rail corridor linking Scotland's cities.**
- **Delivering digital adoption funding to help business embrace new technology to improve their productivity.**

Sustained economic growth is the key route to improving living standards, reducing poverty and the bringing prosperity to all parts of our country. The Labour Party has a proud legacy of delivering social change, but we know that greater equality and opportunity for all is only achievable when backed up by a strong economy that creates growth and jobs. For too long Scotland has focused on what we cannot do, instead of focusing on what is possible. A Scottish Labour government will use all the economic levers at our disposal to unlock Scotland's huge economic potential.

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO GROWTH

Growth will only happen if government works with business to drive investment and create jobs. Instead of government slowing things down, Scottish Labour will use government's convening power to bring people together to find solutions and get things done. We can create real

opportunities for workers and business in partnership with industry by:

- **Creating a single industrial strategy** to replace the complicated and confusing multitude of plans, strategies and frameworks. Developed with business, it will provide certainty for investors, give direction to economic agencies, and maximise the benefits for Scotland within the UK's growth sectors.
- **Establishing a Scottish Board of Trade** to replace the myriad business working groups, delivery boards, business forums and groups that the SNP use to say they have consulted business. Under Scottish Labour, businesses and trade unions will have a single consistent channel to inform government policy and help deliver on shared, national economic objectives.
- **Abolishing the unfair business rates system**, replacing it with a new local business levy designed with business and which incentivises local investment, supports vibrant town

centres, tackles empty properties, and encourages 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.
- **Promoting Brand Scotland around the world**, to attract investment and boost exports in collaboration with business and the UK Government.

DECLUTTERING THE ECONOMIC AGENCIES

For a small country, getting things done is unnecessarily complicated.

Growth opportunities for business and communities are being lost in the maze of enterprise, innovation and investment agencies which businesses and investors struggle to navigate. Scottish Labour will end the confusion and streamline our economic agencies by:

- **Refocusing enterprise agencies on delivery**, taking responsibility for

economic policy and strategy back into the Scottish Government so enterprise agencies prioritise innovation, international growth, and economic development across regions.

- **Internationally benchmarking the performance of agencies** with success measured on direct and real results, including productivity gains, attracting investment, and sector-focused outcomes.
- **Creating a single source of public investment capital**, consolidating the Scottish Futures Trust and investment funds of Scottish Enterprise into the Scottish National Investment Bank so firms of all sizes have clarity about where to access capital.
- **Clarifying the mission of the Scottish National Investment Bank**, setting out new priorities for the Bank within the first 100 days so it is focused on housing development, supporting emerging businesses, and crowding in private investment.

- **Partnering with local business schools and organisations** to deliver early-stage business advice, ending Business Gateway and ensuring entrepreneurs and start-ups have the expert advice and local mentoring they need.
- **Concentrating Scottish Enterprise on growing Scottish businesses**, supporting SMEs to scale-up, and partnering with established and ambitious firms to become more productive, expand, and compete in global markets.
- **Improving coordination across Scottish and UK Institutions**, so that businesses at every stage, from start-up to international exporter, have clarity over where to access advice and finance that is right for them.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Scotland's rich and diverse geography means that each region has different strengths and needs when it comes to economic development, but they are

being held back by an outdated “one size fits all” approach. Scottish Labour want to champion our cities and regions and empower regional leaders to drive economic growth. We will:

- **Push power out of Holyrood** and grant Scottish regions the opportunity to take control of local skills and employability schemes, transport, and housing, so they can tailor interventions to local needs and encourage cooperation between local authorities to reduce duplication and deliver economic outcomes.
- **Consult on giving regions the right to create Regional Mayors**, learning from regional devolution elsewhere. If supported locally, mayors will work alongside local authorities and act as democratically elected regional champions.
- **Improve intercity travel**, creating a fast rail corridor that links Scotland’s cities with electrified trains and more frequent Glasgow–Edinburgh express

services to boost capacity and cut journey times for commuters and rail freight.

- **Establish a new National Land Use Plan**, so that Scotland's regions and landscapes are being best used for community prosperity, achieving net zero, delivering economic growth and protecting our natural environment.

SUPPORTING RURAL ECONOMIES

Scotland has vast and well-developed rural industries and economies which deserve proper recognition and tailored support from government. If we want to reverse depopulation and protect Gaelic as a living language we must sustain livelihoods in our rural places. To support rural jobs and business, Scottish Labour will:

- **Prioritise rural-specific industries within our industrial strategy**, ensuring that government interventions are designed for both rural and urban areas from inception.

- **Modernise Scotland's agricultural support system** so that it is fit for purpose and fairer for all. We would ensure public money for farming supports food production, biodiversity and maintaining thriving rural communities.
- **Support smaller farmers and crofters** by capping tier 1 payments to the largest businesses and redistributing to smaller enterprises. Any changes would be in line with our net zero ambitions and phased in so that no producers face cliff edges.
- **Invest in local abattoirs and fish processing facilities**, commissioning a strategic review of processing investment to support local producers and maintain quality Scottish products, recognising food and drink as a key economic asset.
- **Review crofting legislation**, ensuring it matches our wider ambitions for rural Scotland and keeps crofting accessible for the next generation.

- **Reform fishing quota management**, supporting more local governance, incentivising more sustainable fishing practices, increasing the leasing of quotas, and protecting fisheries' workers.
- **Develop the forestry and timber industry**, increasing the use of home-grown timber as part of our plans to increase offsite construction of homes and helping the sector diversify into higher value products and processing.

INVESTMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Scotland has become a complicated and unpredictable place to do business, while low investment holds back innovation, business growth and job creation. Scottish Labour will make Scotland an attractive choice for investors, benefitting workers and communities, and supporting development across the country by:

- **Overhauling the planning system**, reforming NPF4 so that decision-

makers can take account of the economic potential of projects, designating housing as critical infrastructure and expanding the use of zonal planning.

- **Speeding up planning decisions**, transforming the planning hub into a national planning agency, with expertise and specialist teams that local authorities can draw on for complex projects and guaranteeing timelines for decisions.
- **Hosting an annual Scottish Economic Forum**, bringing together Scottish business to showcase Scottish produce and projects to investors and international markets.
- **Targeting foreign direct investment** that adds value, evaluating impact based on jobs created and the critical infrastructure that it delivers.
- **Creating a National Transport Connections Plan**, identifying priority transport projects and investments across Scotland which will help drive

the economy and support growing businesses.

- **Backing local infrastructure projects in every region**, reviewing the government's infrastructure pipeline to ensure it improves connectivity and economic development across the country.

SCALING-UP BUSINESS

Growing businesses are key to a strong economy and the creation of good jobs, but too many promising SMEs and start-ups are struggling to expand in Scotland because of a lack of capital. Scottish Labour will help businesses get the support and funding needed to grow, rather than get stuck in a cycle of bureaucratic grants by:

- **Prioritising business scale-up in government funding**, shifting enterprise support towards loans focused on delivering growth and improving business productivity, with stricter criteria for returns on public investment.

- **Refocusing SNIB's innovation mission**, so that it specialises in de-risking Scottish scale-ups, crowding in private investment and attracting commercial investment that creates benefits across Scotland.
- **Increasing Scotland's spin out rate to match the UK average**, with dedicated funding to encourage collaboration between business and university researchers to develop early stage spin-outs with market appeal.
- **Equipping Scottish graduates with business experience**, developing dedicated business start-up modules and workshops that can be added to degrees alongside mentorships, competitions and voluntary entrepreneur programmes.

A COMMITMENT TO BUILD AND BUY IN SCOTLAND

The SNP's failure to back Scottish businesses with government contracts has cost the country jobs and prosperity.

Scottish Labour will use government spending power to support strategic supply chains, backing Scottish jobs and industry. To make sure we build more of our ships, buses and infrastructure in Scotland we will:

- **Embed social and economic value weighting into public contracts**, delivering long overdue reforms to Scottish procurement laws so public money delivers public good.
- **Establish a long-term procurement plan for shipbuilding** with our new ferry agency, giving domestic shipyards certainty about pipelines of work and consistency of design.
- **Expand procurement challenges for Scottish businesses**, with dedicated mentorship and financial support for Scottish businesses to develop and test innovations that government can adopt as first customer.
- **Revamp business support and training** so Scottish SMEs are encouraged and

helped to bid for and deliver public contracts.

- **Improve data gathering on origin** of goods and local procurement, mapping opportunities for businesses and the social and economic value created by procurement.

EMBRACING NEW TECHNOLOGY

Innovation helps Scottish businesses stay competitive, open new markets, and build resilient local supply chains. Technological innovation does not stand still and so neither can Scotland if our growing tech sector is to thrive. To strengthen Scotland's tech ecosystem and ensure Scottish business have the skills to make the most of new developments, we will establish:

- **New rounds of digital adoption funding**, to help businesses adopt digital tools that improve their productivity and help them grow.
- **A target to improve R&D so it matches the UK average**, with strategic advice

and support for business on accessing UK R&D reliefs and encouraging R&D through government procurement challenges.

- **A National Data Library**, to support researchers who want to develop solutions to improve healthcare, tackle inequality and test the impacts of innovation.
- **An expanded Techscalers network**, prioritising areas where there are geographic gaps and where it can have most impact on business growth.
- **Dedicated support for creative technology businesses**, ensuring Techscalers and Scottish Enterprise are set up to help grow innovative creative industry businesses.
- **Innovation clusters for key growth sectors**, connecting enterprise agencies with universities, colleges and large businesses to expand the reach and market potential of new research.

- **Accelerate internet connectivity**, prioritising the deployment of full-fibre broadband and working with the mobile network operators to roll-out 5G in under-served areas.

SCOTLAND'S ENERGY FUTURE

The energy transition represents a huge opportunity in Scotland but to date there has been a failure to turn renewables' potential into domestic jobs and prosperity. Oil and gas production will continue in the North Sea for decades to come, and we will ensure there is a genuine just transition that generates growth, creates good skilled jobs, and gives Scotland energy security once again. To deliver for energy workers and our economy we will:

- **Remove the ideological block on new nuclear energy**, ensuring Scotland can benefit from the investment, jobs and zero-carbon energy that comes from the development of small modular reactors and prevent the need for Scotland to rely on imported nuclear power.

- **Support transition plans for key industrial sites**, such as Grangemouth and Mossmorran, working with businesses, local partners and the UK Government to attract new industry and secure a viable industrial future for these areas.
- **Improve the passporting of skills**, building on progress made to date with our new Digital Skills Passport to allow offshore workers to move seamlessly between oil and gas and renewables.
- **Plan for the energy sector within our industrial strategy**, classifying grid build as a national planning priority, supporting the expansion of renewable energy including wind, pumped hydro, solar and tidal, and promoting Scotland's expertise in decommissioning.
- **Introduce 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.

- **Back the transition in the North East**, delivering £40m of funding over the Parliament for Opportunity North East and the Energy Transition Zone in Aberdeen.
- **Deliver transition loans to supply chain businesses**, to ensure Scottish business can meet the manufacturing needs of the renewables' expansion and building necessary expertise in the Scottish National Investment Bank in partnership with GB Energy and the UK National Wealth Fund.

The emphasis on rural economies and industries is a sign of how important rural communities are to Scottish Labour.

Donald MacKinnon, crofter

We need sustained economic growth that provides the right conditions for businesses to grow and for living standards to improve in every part of Scotland.

Raymond Hamilton, businessman

Developing skills and creating good jobs

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- Ringfencing Scotland's share of Apprenticeship Levy funding for skills development.
- Reforming college funding so that it delivers stable funding linked to employment outcomes and supports colleges to invest for expansion.
- Embedding fair work principles in public procurement and investment.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- Creating regional employability hubs, located in local colleges for anyone who wants to find work or retrain to boost their earnings.
- Allowing individuals to tailor their apprenticeship, so that employers and

apprentices can build a programme that suits their needs.

- **Producing long-term skills and labour forecasts for key sectors, every three to five years.**
- **Maintaining free tuition for university and working on a future funding and governance model for higher education.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Guaranteeing apprenticeships for qualified applicants, with 9,000 new apprenticeship places.**
- **Establishing Apprenticeship Centres of Excellence so that key industries have the pipeline of cutting-edge skills they need to grow.**
- **Creating a Digital Skills Passport, so that everyone has a digital record they can share with employers and use to move between jobs and careers.**

Upskilling our people is the greatest investment we can make in the future of our country. Scotland needs a world-class skills and training system if we are to deliver growth, tackle poverty with new opportunities and improve our quality of living. Yet, Scotland's education system is disconnected from industry, resulting in skills shortages across the economy while too many young people are out of education, employment or training. Scottish Labour will transform the skills system so that it equips Scots with the skills that businesses need now and in the future.

ECONOMIC GROWTH CREATING JOBS

Scotland's skills system is often too slow to adapt to the changing needs of workers and employers, and is not sufficiently focused on the needs of the real economy. Scottish Labour will ensure skills policy is aligned with industrial strategy, helping to create good jobs by:

- **Establishing a statutory skills board**, with a direct role advising on the design of apprenticeships and skills measures. As a sub-group of our new Board of Trade, membership will be drawn from Apprenticeship Levy payers, trade unions and SMEs.
- **Producing long-term skills and labour forecasts** for key sectors, every three to five years. These forecasts will help inform the work of our new Skills Board and support planning in the skills system.
- **Ringfencing Scotland's share of Apprenticeship Levy funding for skills development**, ensuring there is transparency about the funding received by the Scottish Government and committing to spend it on apprenticeships, upskilling and reskilling programmes.
- **Supporting graduates to get work-ready**, supporting colleges and universities to develop skills-based modules and industrial placements

that can be built into existing courses and studies.

THE FUTURE OF APPRENTICESHIPS

Scotland's Modern Apprenticeship programme is respected for emphasising quality and rigour, but it isn't accessible enough for those looking for roles, or flexible enough for the modern economy. Scottish Labour will modernise our apprenticeship system so that it delivers a route into well paid, skilled work for young people by:

- **Introducing "Taster Apprenticeships",** giving young people experience of a workplace and the apprenticeship model before they commit, to help them find opportunities that suit them best.
- **Guaranteeing an apprenticeship place for every qualified applicant,** with the creation of 9,000 additional apprenticeships in key growth sectors, funded by reallocating resource from Skills Development Scotland.

- **Creating clearing systems for apprenticeships**, similar to the UCAS model, to help young people find new opportunities in key sectors and ensure good candidates do not drop out of the system.
- **Allowing individuals to tailor their apprenticeship**, designating core and optional courses so that employers and apprentices can build a programme that suits their needs and keeps them on the cutting edge of skills development.
- **Supporting employers to share apprentices**, expanding and diversifying the pool of employers participating in the apprenticeship system and creating more opportunities.
- **Expanding Graduate Apprenticeships**, working with universities to increase the range of courses available, so more people can earn while they study for a degree.

EMPLOYABILITY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

People are more likely to be working longer and changing jobs or careers more often. Scotland needs a more agile skills system that helps people of all ages to upskill or retrain so they can find work and progress. Scottish Labour will:

- **Create a Digital Skills Passport**, so that everyone has a digital record of their skill level, formal qualifications, work experience, and technical and vocational training. It will provide clarity for employers and workers, helping people to move between jobs and careers.
- **Establish a Parent Works Scheme**, funding colleges to deliver dedicated training and employment support for parents who are unemployed or in low paid work, so they can fill local skills gaps, boost their household incomes and help lift children out of poverty.
- **Launch regional employability hubs**, located in local colleges and bringing together skills providers, local

businesses, and schools to deliver a single front door into the skills system for anyone who wants to find work or retrain to boost their earnings.

- **Embed training and workforce development into public procurement contracts**, incentivising businesses to upskill their workforces and driving training options for people across the country.
- **Develop short reskilling courses**, tailored to fill skills gaps in the local economy and delivered by local colleges.

BACKING FAIR WORK

Creating and protecting good, fair work is at the heart of Scottish Labour's vision for our economy. Under a Scottish Labour government, growth will come with well paid jobs, a better quality of life, and more businesses owned by workers. We will back the delivery of fair work by:

- **Ensuring trade unions always have a seat at the table**, with representation

on our Board of Trade and inclusion in all engagement work the government does with business.

- **Promoting best practice through our Board of Trade**, sharing learning from businesses and trade unions that have successfully put fair work into practice to benefit industry and workers.
- **Embedding fair work principles in public procurement and investment**, giving weight to social impact, local economic value, and commitments to fair work when awarding public funding or taking investment decisions through SNIB.
- **Establishing a Scottish Council for Employment Injuries**, to advise on the recognition of industrial head injuries in football and the removal of barriers in the current system, particularly for women.
- **Legislating to protecting workers from assault**, bringing in stronger sentences for those who attack people in the course of their work.

- **Working with local authorities on resolution of equal pay cases**, ensuring job revaluations take place without delay.

A NEW VISION FOR COLLEGES

The skills and vocational education offered by Scotland's colleges is key to reducing economic inequalities and supporting business, but years of cuts have undermined their social and economic impact. Scottish Labour will give colleges a clear purpose, making them engines of growth and social mobility in regions once again by:

- **Recognising colleges as a key partner in our industrial strategy**, setting out their distinct roles in each region and connecting them to agreed, measurable outcomes.
- **Reforming college funding** so that it delivers stable multi-year funding which is linked to employment outcomes and apprenticeships, and which allows colleges to invest for expansion.

- **Creating Apprenticeship Centres of Excellence** in colleges around the country, so that key industries have the pipeline of cutting-edge skills they need to grow.
- **Delivering defence technical colleges**, match funding UK Government investment to deliver two sites in Scotland.
- **Setting up regional Skills Accelerators**, with colleges leading collaboration between regional businesses and training providers on skills need, and co-designing training with clear routes to work.
- **Simplifying vocational qualifications**, to create lifelong learning pathways and supporting the development of modular courses that can be tailored to individual and business needs.

BACKING OUR HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Scotland's universities are among the best in the world and home to groundbreaking research. The sector creates jobs

and contributes to local and national economies, but we know that it is facing difficult challenges. Scottish Labour will work to protect access to Scotland's world-leading universities by:

- **Maintaining free tuition for Scotland's undergraduates**, ensuring that attending university can still be an aspiration for all, and Scottish young people continue to benefit from the employment and earning opportunities that come from studying university degrees.
- **Protecting the sustainability of the sector**, working in partnership on a future funding and governance model that delivers accountability and financial stability, and ensures Scotland continues to have a vibrant university sector.
- **Supporting research capacity in Scotland's universities**, encouraging collaboration between universities and business, improving access to data with the National Data Library and

establishing targets for R&D and spin outs.

Creating 9,000 new apprenticeships means we equip young people with the skills they need to get well-paid jobs.

Francesca Brennan, primary school teacher

Setting our young people up to succeed

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- **Banning mobile phones in classrooms so that schools are safe and calm places for learning once again.**
- **Implementing an education recovery programme, with up to 2,000 specialist teachers to help children who have fallen the furthest behind.**
- **Replacing the SNP's discredited primary school testing, with standardised, sample-based testing and international benchmarking.**

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- **Establishing a proper education workforce plan, so that teacher training places are linked to future jobs.**

- **Recruiting 1,500 more classroom assistants to help teachers manage behaviour and give pupils more 1:1 support.**
- **Finally delivering excellence through the curriculum, with a focus on knowledge and new national standards for numeracy and literacy.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Creating Scottish Industry Standards for growth sectors, helping young people to link their school subjects to career pathways.**
- **Delivering industry work placements for every secondary school pupil, and certified work experience which young people can record on their Digital Skills Passport.**
- **Guaranteeing every P5 pupil the opportunity to learn basic swimming and water safety skills.**

The young people of Scotland have enormous potential; they are the workers, entrepreneurs, and leaders of tomorrow. We know that education has the power to change young people's lives, but Scotland's schools have fallen down the international league tables and too often a child's background still defines their future. Scottish Labour will back our children from cradle to career, restoring excellence and equity in our education system and ensuring that every young person has the opportunity to succeed.

RESTORING ORDER IN CLASSROOMS

No teacher or pupil should feel unsafe in the classroom, but there have been widespread reports of rising violence and aggression in Scottish schools. Children's education is disrupted by poor behaviour and stark rises in school absence. Scottish Labour will protect the wellbeing of those in our schools and restore order to Scotland's classrooms by:

- **Banning mobile phones in classrooms** so that schools are safe and calm

places for learning once again. We would also back a UK-wide ban on social media for under-16s to better protect young people from cyberbullying and harmful online content.

- **Recruiting 1,500 more classroom assistants** to help teachers manage behaviour and give pupils more 1:1 support.
- **Backing teachers on discipline**, with an enforceable National Behaviour Charter to define pupils' rights and responsibilities and set out clear escalating consequences, including exclusion, to prevent disruption in classrooms.
- **Expanding the number of campus cops.** Crime prevention officers will build relationships with local schools and intervene early with young people known to engage in anti-social and aggressive behaviour.
- **Improving attendance with Family Network Coordinators**, as part of our

plans to create family support hubs in primary schools. Coordinators will connect directly with families with non-attendance to support children back into the classroom where they should be.

- **Creating a national attendance register**, gathering better data on absence and attendance so targeted interventions can support young people to re-engage with school.

RAISING STANDARDS AND BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

Every young person should leave school equipped with the knowledge and skills they need for life and the modern economy. Raising standards and broadening opportunities are inseparable goals but the fragmented and often confusing curriculum is letting down young people. To tackle inequality, Scottish Labour will bring back a focus on knowledge and improve attainment by:

- **Implementing an education recovery programme**, with up to 2,000 specialist reading and numeracy teachers working directly with the children who have fallen the furthest behind.
- **Finally delivering excellence through the curriculum**, with new national standards for numeracy and literacy setting out what pupils should know at each stage and preparing them for whatever future they choose.
- **Embedding digital skills and literacy** across the curriculum, so that pupils can utilise new technology ethically and can navigate the risks associated with AI and social media.
- **Scrapping the SNP's discredited primary school testing**, replacing it with standardised, sample-based testing and international benchmarking to gather better data on attainment.
- **Transforming Education Scotland into a true education department** so it is properly accountable to Ministers and tasked with creating

a coherent national curriculum with better resources in core subjects for classroom teachers.

- **Retaining exams** as a key method of assessment within a mix of methods that are robust and have the confidence of pupils, employers and education institutions.
- **Boosting numbers of STEM teachers**, creating career switching pathways for people interested in training as teachers and creating a teaching Graduate Apprenticeship for graduates in STEM subjects.

SUPPORTING ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Too often children with the highest needs are left to fall through the cracks. Young people with additional support needs should have an education and health system that is set up to help them, not exclude them. Scottish Labour will address this with:

- **Increased staff capacity in ASN classrooms**, with 300 of our new pupil

support assistants based in specialist ASN units or schools to support the children with the highest needs.

- **Supporting transitions to adulthood**, ensuring that young people with additional needs have the support they require.
- **New widespread training** on neurodiversity and additional needs for school and healthcare staff.
- **A new national neurodevelopmental pathway** so that neurodivergent people can get the right support instead of being stuck on inappropriate mental health waiting lists.
- **Implementation of the Restraint and Seclusion Bill**, providing proper training to education staff and ensuring parents are kept informed about the use of restraint on their child.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORLD OF WORK

Regardless of what path young people choose after school, Scottish Labour

believes that they all deserve the same support, guidance and championing. Schools should inspire our young people about their future and prepare them for the opportunities that exist in Scotland's businesses and industries. Scottish Labour will ensure our young people are ready for the world of work with:

- **A new Skills for Schools programme** which demonstrates the range of career possibilities in industry. Instead of the current patchwork provision, this new programme will ensure every school builds links with local workplaces and delivers classroom visits from industry role models, workshops related to the world of work, enterprise projects and visits to workplaces.
- **Revamped skills and careers advice**, with timetabled access for every pupil to get guidance and advice on local opportunities and growing sectors.
- **Industry work placements for every secondary school pupil** and certified work experience with local employers,

public services and innovative sectors which young people can record on their Digital Skills Passport.

- **Scottish Industry Standards for growth sectors**, helping young people to link their school subjects to career pathways by outlining the subjects and qualifications that match employers' skills needs.
- **Entrepreneurialism taught in schools**, expanding the reach of Young Enterprise Scotland and including teaching on business skills and experience throughout the curriculum.

SUPPORTING THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE

High quality teaching and support makes the biggest difference in education.

Scotland does not lack talented teachers or education staff, but they are increasingly under pressure and at risk of burnout. Scottish Labour will end the retention crisis and ensure teachers and staff can give pupils the support they need by:

- **Reducing teacher workloads**, removing unnecessary bureaucracy or form filling, boosting numbers of support staff, and providing teachers with clear teaching resources through our curriculum and assessment reforms.
- **Establishing a proper education workforce plan**, so that teacher training places are linked to future jobs and based on projections of pupil needs and numbers.
- **Providing jobs for teachers**, recruiting underemployed teachers to deliver our education recovery programme in schools, gathering better data on the number of qualified teachers and providing greater certainty with permanent contracts and jobs.
- **Making PEF money permanent**, so that schools have stability to plan their workforces to tackle poverty and improve attainment.
- **Develop career pathways for support staff**, working with trade unions to develop workforce plans and

accreditation processes for pupil support and behaviour assistants so their crucial role is properly recognised and valued.

- **Creating a national supply register**, to reduce the barriers for supply teachers working in multiple local authorities and help them find work near where they live.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Closing the opportunity gap for Scotland's young people is about more than mere attainment in core school subjects. All children, regardless of their background, should get the chance to succeed and to experience the arts, culture, sport and creative activities. Scottish Labour will break down barriers holding back our young people by:

- **Giving every child the chance to learn to swim**, guaranteeing every P5 pupil the opportunity to learn basic swimming and water safety skills.

- **Establishing access to music tuition for all primary school pupils**, expanding existing provision with a National Online Music Platform to help classroom teachers introduce all children to music earlier.
- **Expanding after school clubs**, helping more young people to access sport and cultural activities outside of school while helping parents to maintain more working hours.
- **Supporting mentoring programmes** that help care-experienced and disadvantaged young Scots to build their confidence and achieve their potential.
- **Funding summer holiday clubs**, with two weeks of summer activities for primary aged children to spend time with friends and help parents with childcare.
- **Creating a new preventative model for youth work**, engaging with young people and helping them to make healthy choices.

- **Continuing work to deliver the Promise to children in care**, aiming to end the role of profit in care for children.

The SNP has been in power since before I was born, I have never known anything else. Surely this isn't as good as it gets. We desperately need change if we want to restore faith in government and politics for every generation.

Amelie Burt, student

As a teacher I know the difference Scottish Labour's reading and numeracy recovery programme will make to primary pupils and how it will allow them to catch up, which will change their lives.

Jenny Young, secondary school former teacher

Stronger communities

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- **Establishing a £350m pothole fund to fix the roads and fill up to five million potholes.**
- **Delivering reliable ferry services, merging CMAL and CalMac into a single public ferry agency with local representation on the board.**
- **Reforming Creative Scotland to improve transparency and put more creative funding into the hands of artists.**

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- **Delivering fair funding for local services, agreeing a new funding formula for local government.**
- **Agreeing a statutory new deal for the third sector, with multi-year funding and shared objectives to tackle social**

inequality and reduce poverty.

- **Promoting digital inclusion and helping more people to get online.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Ringfencing at least £100m of ScotWind revenues to help fund community owned energy.**
- **Fast-tracking bus franchising so that we can bring bus services back under local control.**
- **Pushing power out of Holyrood and giving people more of a say over regional services with a Local Democracy Act.**

Scotland's towns, cities and neighbourhoods should be places where Scots can grow up, raise families, live well and grow old together in community. Each part of Scotland has distinct characteristics and strengths that should be celebrated but huge inequalities persist, with poverty and deprivation holding back so many individuals' and families' potential. Uncertainty about the future, injustice going unaddressed, and a sense that nothing works only stokes division and discontent in our society. Scottish Labour will empower local people and rebuild the resilience of our communities, so they once again promote fairness and improve lives for the better.

RESTORING GOOD LOCAL SERVICES

People across Scotland want local services that deliver the basics well – bin collections, clean streets, green spaces, well maintained roads, accessible leisure centres and open libraries. These building blocks help create strong and

supportive communities, but they have been undermined by years of cuts and centralisation. Scottish Labour will ensure local people can create good places to live by:

- **Delivering fair funding for local services**, agreeing a new funding formula for local government that takes account of local levies and the services that councils deliver, so that local areas can never again be shortchanged by central government.
- **Passing a Local Democracy Act**, to push decision making power out of Holyrood so local people have more of a say over public services in their area and have the right to elect regional mayors.
- **Agreeing a statutory new deal for the third sector**, with multi-year funding and new agreements on resourcing, as well as shared objectives for tackling social inequality, reducing poverty, and increasing social prosperity.

- **Giving local people a say over service closures**, requiring statutory consultations whenever councils plan to shut local libraries, sports and leisure facilities, or community venues.
- **Pausing plans for further cuts to the fire service**, ensuring the service has the resources needed to keep the public safe and develop their role supporting the wider emergency services.
- **Work to deliver reliable postal services**, so everyone in Scotland can access the affordable delivery services they need.

BOOSTING LOCAL OWNERSHIP

We believe that local people should benefit from the wealth that is generated within their communities. To boost local ownership and community wealth building we will:

- **Work with local authorities so they can generate income from community owned assets**, making sure they have

the powers and resources as part of our new fair funding agreement.

- **Encourage the expansion of cooperative and employee-owned models**, with better data on their prevalence and success in Scotland, and specialist advice available for business on how to convert to these models.
- **Redefine community benefit**, so funds derived from local energy projects deliver tangible, long-term results for communities, and mandating contributions in future consenting of offshore wind projects.
- **Establish a community energy fund**, ringfencing at least £100m of ScotWind revenues to be used as low cost finance for communities to develop or take equity in local energy projects, ensuring the money is recirculated for the benefit of future generations.
- **Simplify Community Right to Buy**, making the legal process easier for local people to buy and own local

land and assets for the benefit of communities.

TRANSPORT THAT IS BETTER FOR PEOPLE

Good transport should make our lives easier but many of Scotland's communities are being held back by unreliable and poorly maintained services. New transport projects are continually delayed and the public transport connections that people rely on are frequently cancelled or cut altogether. Scottish Labour knows that if we are to boost the prosperity of our regions, we need to deliver transport that works for people. We will:

- **Establish a £350m potholes and road maintenance fund** so that local authorities can fix the state of Scotland's roads for all road users, repairing almost 5 million potholes over the course of the Parliament and improving oversight and maintenance of road repairs.

- **Bring local bus services back under public control**, reforming regulations to fast track franchising and supporting local authorities to purchase the infrastructure needed to deliver locally run services that boost bus routes and improve affordability.
- **Deliver reliable ferry services**, merging CMAL and CalMac into a single public ferry agency with local representation on the board and a long-term procurement plan to upgrade Scotland's ageing ferry fleet.
- **Upgrade Scotland's road network**, dualling the A9 by 2035, commissioning a business case for the dualling of the A77 and 75, and creating a new National Roads Plan to prioritise upgrades based on economic need, public safety, and local connectivity.
- **Work to deliver integrated smart ticketing across Scotland**, making use of the public ownership of ScotRail and progress on bus franchising to

finally deliver seamless connections for passengers.

- **Deliver a better rail network for Scotland**, with no return to peak fares, continued rail electrification, a fast intercity rail corridor between Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, delivery of the Glasgow airport rail link, and a National Transport Connections Plan to identify priority transport projects and investments to improve connectivity and support growth.

CHAMPIONING CULTURE AND SPORT

Scotland's talent is prodigious – we have produced some of the best athletes, musicians and actors in the world. Our vibrant culture sector inspires creatives and makes Scotland an exciting place to live. In sport the legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth Games was never delivered so we will complete the legacy following the 2026 Games. To ensure people across Scotland can enjoy thriving arts and sports scenes, Scottish Labour will:

- **Promote music and sports in school,** with an online music tuition platform to extend access and a guaranteed chance to swim for all P5 pupils.
- **Establish a Major Events Bureau,** strengthening the Edinburgh festivals, supporting the expansion of the Scottish Events Campus, and positioning Scotland as leading destination for world-class sport, culture, and international conferences.
- **Pilot 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.
- **Reform Creative Scotland,** improving transparency and accountability so it is representative and responsive to people from all backgrounds. New objectives will ensure creative funding is put in the hands of artists, supports fair work, and delivers for the sector.

- **Designate a creative capital fund**, to deliver financial support to upgrade and protect venues across the country.
- **Extend pilots of alcohol sales at football matches**, evaluating the impacts on a rolling basis and working with clubs to improve the experience of fans.
- **Partner with Scotland's Sporting Associations**, starting with the Scottish Football Association, to promote the health and community benefits of sport across the country and to people from all backgrounds.

CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY

Scottish Labour believes in the right of everyone to live healthy, happy lives in Scotland, free from discrimination. Scottish Labour is determined break down the barriers that prevent people from fully participating and contributing to public life and society. We will:

- **Deliver an additional £10m for Changing Places toilets**, renewing the fund for the next parliamentary term to address the lack of provision across Scotland.
- **Take steps to close the disability pay gap**, ensuring that our reforms to employability support include targeted programmes to help disabled people into well paid work.
- **Provide consistent funding for interfaith groups**, ending the unpredictable “small pots” approach of the SNP and using the convening power of government to exchange ideas and bring people together.
- **Protect the status of denominational schools in Scotland**, recognising the high quality education and choice they offer pupils and parents, and the contribution they make to local communities.
- **Work to deliver a conversion practices ban** on a four nation basis to prevent the creation of any possible loopholes

across the UK and protect LGBT+ people from harmful conversion practices.

- **Create an accessible information standard for Scotland**, learning from the consultation on the proposed Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill, improving inclusive communication by public bodies, and ensuring alternative means of communication, such as easy-read, are provided on request.

STANDING UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A Scottish Labour government will also ensure that people's rights are protected and upheld. We will take a new approach; instead of legislating without resources, we will focus government on delivery of public services that fulfil people's rights by:

- **Reforming the Commissioner landscape** so it is more strategic and impactful, reviewing the roles and remits of existing Commissioners, exploring how their powers and back-

office functions could be standardised to deliver the best experience for people who need to rely on their services.

- **Boosting the work of the Scottish Human Rights Commission,** ensuring it is properly resourced and empowered to review and advise on the implementation of human rights in Scotland, and exploring the potential creation of a rapporteur model.
- **Delivering single-sex spaces on the basis of biological sex,** in NHS wards, schools, sport and everyday life by upholding the Equality Act and delivering clear instructions to public services on how to comply with their legal obligations to women and to trans people.
- **Protecting the safety of places of worship,** ensuring our new crime and community police officers work with local faith groups in their ward to build relationships, promote security and protect worshippers if necessary.

- **Challenging racial and religious prejudice through education,** continuing support for organisations such as Holocaust Education Trust and backing campaigns to tackle disinformation and hate online.

PROMOTING DIGITAL INCLUSION

Digital access and skills are crucial for participation in modern society but the urgency to tackle digital exclusion has been lost. We want Scotland to realise the benefits of new technology and digitisation, so Scottish Labour will provide the leadership needed to tackle digital poverty. We will ensure no one is locked out of digital services by:

- **Extending free SIM programmes,** joining up public, private and third sector work and providing clearer eligibility criteria to allow for better signposting and wider impact.

- **Promoting uptake of broadband social tariffs**, working with industry to help everyone who is eligible for support to get online.
- **Creating “digital playgrounds”** with digital equipment available in public spaces such as schools, libraries and museums where young people can safely engage with technology and innovation.
- **Establishing a digital mentors’ network**, with trained volunteers stationed in trusted community spaces such as Citizens Advice Centres, supermarkets, and libraries around the country, offering targeted assistance toward people least likely to seek help.
- **Expanding device donation schemes**, providing refurbished government laptops and phones to those that need them, and exploring options to partner with the private sector through free SIM schemes.

- **Identifying digital champions in every local authority** to coordinate digital inclusion policy and connectivity across local government and deliver training for frontline workers on how to recognise signs of digital exclusion and signpost people to support.

Empowering local people and devolving decision-making is transformational for our communities. It makes them stronger.

Paul Godzik, local development trust director

Scotland is already a great place for music and sport but a Major Events Bureau would enhance our cultural scene to an exciting new level.

Xavier Cottrell-Boyce, student

A safer Scotland

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- **Returning police officers back to the front line and giving every neighbourhood a named community and crime prevention officer.**
- **Scrapping the sentencing guidelines for under-25s, so sentences are fair and no one escapes justice because of their age.**
- **Crushing illegal e-bikes, using drone technology to track and trace unlicensed bikes for seizure.**

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- **Making the police accountable to local people, setting out new Strategic Policing Priorities within the first 100 days.**
- **Preventing bail for those with histories of violence to women, to protect victims of domestic abuse.**

- **Criminalising the exploitation of children, holding to account those who seek to take advantage of young people.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Creating a specialist victims' support team, who can coordinate between justice agencies and act as a single point of contact for victims.**
- **Funding 40 legal aid traineeships annually, to provide a pipeline of talent in the workforce and improve access to legal aid solicitors.**
- **Restoring the Cashback for Communities Youth Work Fund, with £1m dedicated to funding local approaches to youth work and crime prevention.**

Building secure and strong communities depends on people feeling safe in their homes and on the streets, but communities across Scotland face rising levels of antisocial behaviour and violent crime. The lack of a local police presence means many crimes which undermine the safety of neighbourhoods go uninvestigated and unpunished. Victims of crime need faith that criminals will be prosecuted and face consequences, but Scotland's outdated courts and prisons are too slow to deliver the justice they deserve. Scottish Labour will restore security and make our neighbourhoods safe again.

BRINGING BACK COMMUNITY POLICING

Scots need to have confidence that when they call the police they will come and crimes will be investigated. Scottish Labour is determined to restore the trust between the police and local people with visible community policing that reduces local crime. We will:

- **Return police officers back to the frontline in communities**, cutting back on the time officers spend waiting to give evidence in an outdated court system and reducing hours spent on non-police work, like escorting mental health patients in crisis, with our new mental health emergency service.
- **Give every neighbourhood a named community and crime prevention officer**, to work across council wards responding to crime, gathering intelligence and building relationships with retailers, schools and community groups to reduce offending in high crime areas.
- **Make the police accountable to local people**, restoring the statutory obligation for local police divisions to consult on local policing plans and within the first 100 days of government set out new Strategic Policing Priorities that focus on community policing.

- **Creating a new trauma support service for officers**, to properly look after those who keep us safe, helping officers deal with the pressures of the job and reducing sickness levels.
- **Driving technological improvements across the force**, finishing the rollout of body-worn cameras, ensuring fingerprints are recorded at time of arrest for UK-wide collaboration and fast-tracking work on the digitisation of evidence across the justice system.

PRIORITISING PUBLIC SAFETY

Antisocial behaviour and shoplifting undermine the security of our towns and make neighbourhoods feel less safe. The scale of the drugs deaths scandal devastates families and communities while knife crime is a scourge on our society, taking the lives of too many young people. Alongside our plans to boost community policing, Scottish Labour will get a grip on the rising tide of crime in our communities by:

- **Legislating for tougher regulation on the sale of all knives**, to prevent shoplifting of kitchen knives with enhanced rules on security tagging, storage in locked cabinets and a review of sale of domestic knives to under-16s.
- **Removing free bus passes from those who carry out antisocial behaviour**, punishing those who abuse transport staff and revoking the right to free travel from individuals who threaten community safety.
- **Crushing illegal e-bikes**, using drone technology to trace unlicensed bikes for seizure, granting the police powers to issue warnings and fines for dangerous use of motorised and e-bikes in pedestrian and residential areas, and running an awareness campaign about illegal bikes in Scotland to promote responsible ownership.

- **Prosecuting shoplifting**, expanding the remit of the Retail Crime taskforce beyond the central belt. Crime prevention officers will support better coordination between businesses in high crime areas and work with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to ensure those who do not pay fiscal fines face court action.
- **Cracking down on drug dealing**, strengthening cross-border police work to break supply lines, properly resourcing Police Scotland's organised crime teams to disrupt gang operations and using technology to prevent supply into prisons.
- **Protecting postal workers and the public from dangerous dogs**, enhancing regulation and ensuring owners are held to account for dog bites and attacks.
- **Including pyrotechnics football banning orders** closing a gap in the law and ensuring everyone can enjoy games without disorder.

STRONGER PUNISHMENT

The SNP's broken justice system has seen waves of prisoners released early, unchecked cycles of reoffending and victims waiting years for justice. Scotland deserves a government that will deliver robust responses to crime, not dangerous sticking plasters. Scottish Labour will keep communities safe and ensure criminals face consequences for breaking the law by:

- **Increasing the value of Antisocial Behavioural Fines**, meaning those who make communities feel less safe can face fines of up to £500.
- **Legislating to protect workers from assault**, bringing in stronger sentences for those who attack people in the course of their work.
- **Reviewing Community Payback Orders**, to make them more robust with tougher unpaid work requirements and stricter monitoring so that judges have confidence in them as a non-custodial sentence.

- **Prioritising prison capacity for convicted criminals**, speeding up court scheduling for remand prisoners, delivering value for public money and curbing the need for early release of dangerous offenders.
- **Improving transparency over Parole Board decisions**, so its decision-making processes can be clearly communicated to victims and ensuring that it has the remit and powers needed to keep communities safe.
- **Keeping women's prisons for women**, instructing the Scottish Prison Service to remove all biologically male prisoners from women's prisons within days of the election.

REDUCING REOFFENDING

Imprisoning dangerous criminals is the first step to protecting the public from harm but to truly build safe communities, more is required to break the cycle of reoffending. Repeat offending retraumatises victims, damages

community resilience and costs the public purse millions. Scottish Labour will act to prevent reoffending by:

- **Updating bail monitoring technology,** rolling out GPS devices to improve monitoring capability so we can protect victims and make bail arrangements safer for the public.
- **Prioritising mental health and rehabilitation services in prisons,** to help individuals to access healthcare and the support needed to address addiction issues while in custody.
- **Modernising data collection across the justice system,** ensuring that prisoner journeys can be properly tracked so that sentencing decisions and interventions can be targeted and evidence driven.
- **Implementing harm prevention plans for those leaving prisons,** supporting people to successfully reintegrate into society by ensuring they have a safe place to live and are registered with a doctor.

REDUCING YOUTH VIOLENCE

The SNP has been asleep at the wheel while youth violence has reached crisis point. Our young people are Scotland's future and they deserve a justice system that keeps them safe and sets them up for a life of success, free from crime. Scottish Labour will tackle youth violence in our streets by:

- **Scrapping the sentencing guidelines for under-25s**, so that sentences are fair and no one escapes justice because of their age. New guidance will ensure there is clarity and consistency so sentencing also reflects the gravity of the crime committed.
- **Criminalising the exploitation of children**, holding to account those who seek to take advantage of young people to further criminal operations such as the supply of drugs.
- **Establishing Youth Remediation Orders**, as new, tough community sentences targeted at young people who breach the law. These will be an

alternative to prosecution and involve unpaid work to benefit communities, which can also be credited as work experience to offer a route out of crime.

- **Restoring the Cashback for Communities Youth Work Fund**, with £1m dedicated to funding local approaches to youth work and crime prevention in neighbourhoods with high crime rates.
- **Maintaining funding for the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit** over the lifetime of the Parliament so that its important work on violence prevention is not undermined by cuts.

TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Domestic abuse is still prolific in our society, with men overwhelmingly the perpetrators. Misogynistic attitudes and violence are also on the rise, often fuelled by online discourse that is targeted at young men. Scottish Labour is determined to protect women and girls in Scotland by:

- **Establishing a Misogyny Reduction Unit**, based within Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit and treating violence against women and girls as an issue of public health with research and evidence-based interventions..
- **Closing legal loopholes around sexual deepfakes**, ensuring the law criminalises the non-consensual creation of images, as well as the sharing of them.
- **Preventing bail for those with histories of violence to women**, tightening bail laws so those with a history of domestic abuse and violence cannot be bailed to their current or previous partner's address.
- **Boosting uptake of the Equally Safe Programme in schools**, with a graded participation award so that young people and parents can see the work that schools are doing to counter the impact of online misogyny and abusive behaviour.

- **Continue funding for Rape Crisis and Women's Aid**, ensuring resources are delivered to local services which support victims around the country.

STANDING UP FOR VICTIMS

Too often Scotland's justice system fails the very people it is there to protect. To truly deliver justice the system needs to be properly designed to support those harmed by crime. Scottish Labour will ensure all victims are respected and supported by:

- **Creating a specialist victims' support team**, which can coordinate between justice agencies and act as a single point of contact for victims of crime to answer questions in a trauma-informed way.
- **Modernising the victims' notification scheme and communications**, working towards the creation of a digital portal where victims can access updates and information about the progress of their case through the justice system and

control the notifications they are given.

- **Delivering a national Bairns Hoose model**, so child victims or witnesses of violence can engage with the justice system and recovery services in child-friendly environments.
- **Removing parental rights of child sex offenders**, meaning parents convicted of serious sexual offences against children can no longer make decisions in their child's life.
- **Progressing the grooming gangs' inquiry**, ensuring lessons are learned on how to protect victims of group-based sexual exploitation.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The delays and inefficiencies that characterise Scotland's justice system prolong the trauma of victims and exacerbate the crisis in our prisons, all while those reliant on legal aid struggle to access the expert advice they need. A well-functioning justice system should

deliver for all, not just those who have wealth or connections. Scottish Labour will improve access to justice by:

- **Modernising the court system to reduce delays**, fast-tracking the plans to digitise the sharing of evidence and carrying out a productivity review of scheduling in the High Court and Appeal Court, learning from the Summary Case Management initiative.
- **Funding 40 legal aid traineeships annually**, to provide a pipeline of talent in the workforce and improve access to legal aid solicitors, particularly in underserved areas across the country.
- **Expanding pilots for independent legal representation for victims of serious sexual crime**, ensuring that victims are fairly advised and represented in considerations regarding the disclosure of historical evidence.
- **Agreeing on a sustainable approach to legal aid**, ensuring that funding protects access to legal services across the country.

Rising crime and reoffending needs a robust response. Keeping people safe is the Government's first responsibility. That's why there'll be no soft-touch or sticking plasters with Scottish Labour.

Linda Dorward, former prison governor

Homes for all

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- Fixing the broken housing market, with over 50,000 new affordable homes to drive down housing waiting lists and reduce rents.
- Overhauling planning to unlock land and reintroduce the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- Eradicating rough sleeping with an Ending Homelessness Unit to drive action across government.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- Establishing fit for purpose housebuilding targets so local housing plans meet local need.
- Helping renters to save for a deposit, with 5,000 mid-market rents set aside for working families who are saving to buy their own home.

- **Granting homeowners more control over factoring, with higher penalties when factors breach their obligations.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Delivering 125,000 new homes by the end of the Parliament in 2031, across all tenures.**
- **Creating a dedicated Housing Bank, to direct investment into homebuilding.**
- **Consolidating rural housing funds and reviewing the definition of rural housebuilding so homes are built in genuinely rural areas.**

Houses are more than just places to live, they provide the secure foundations upon which we can build our lives, our families and our communities. The quality of housing shapes the quality of our lives and the housing market has the power to define, entrench or reduce wider inequalities. Scottish Labour believes that everybody should have a home that is safe, warm, secure and affordable. That is why we will end the housing emergency in Scotland by prioritising housebuilding once again and taking action across government to prevent homelessness.

GET SCOTLAND BUILDING HOMES AGAIN

Failing to build new homes has had significant social and economic consequences for our country. Only by increasing supply across all types of tenure will we be able to unblock the housing system and deliver the secure homes that Scots need. To kickstart housebuilding across Scotland we will:

- **Deliver 125,000 new homes by 2031,** across all tenures. We will ramp up

supply over the Parliament, building 30,000 new houses in year five.

- **Create a dedicated Housing Bank within the Scottish National Investment Bank**, to direct investment into homebuilding with low cost loans, and funding to regenerate land, scale up offsite manufacturing, and support new housing cooperatives and mid-market rent developments.
- **Establish Housing Development Trusts to act as lead developer for each region**, with responsibility for delivering affordable housing targets, and powers to leverage assets to attract finance and create their own construction companies to get houses built.
- **Train the construction workforce needed to build homes**, prioritising construction skills in our new apprenticeships, and within new Skills Accelerators so that each region has the workers needed to deliver local housing targets.

SPEEDING UP APPROVALS

Slow and complex planning is also holding up housebuilding and preventing a pipeline of developments being established. Scottish Labour will overhaul planning to unlock land and get much needed projects approved by:

- **Treating housing as critical national infrastructure**, making greater use of zonal planning to pre-approve projects and create attractive places for people to live with access to local facilities and services, such as health and education.
- **Reintroducing the presumption in favour of sustainable development**, reforming NPF4 to ensure it supports delivery of our new housing target.
- **Increasing the supply of land for housebuilding**, identifying potential “grey belt” sites where development would not impact the aims of the green belt.
- **Review regulation that adds costs to housing developments**, considering how standardisation of building

regulations and requirements could help deliver projects at greater scale while producing high quality and efficient homes for Scots.

- **Establishing fit for purpose local housebuilding targets**, ensuring that local authorities have housing plans that will deliver our national target and meet local housing needs.

IMPROVING ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY OF HOUSING

As well as increasing supply, we need to ensure people can access the new homes we want to deliver. Scottish Labour is determined to fix the broken housing market so that thousands of people are no longer priced out of homes in the places they want or need to live. We will:

- **Build at least 52,300 affordable homes within our overall target**, including more council and social homes, helping to drive down housing waiting lists and increasing the availability of low-cost housing.

- **Increase the supply of mid-market rent housing**, ensuring public finance can be recycled back into more homes and saving tenants an average of £2,700 a year off market rents.
- **Establish a strategy for the private rented sector**, recognising the role it plays in meeting housing need and working in partnership to drive up standards and experiences for tenants.
- **Review accessible housing plans**, to ensure disabled households are properly prioritised for accessible homes and that national housing supply is future proofed to meet the needs of an ageing population.
- **Protect affordable home ownership discounts**, so that future buyers can also benefit from market discounts and affordable housing stock is not reduced when the initial buyers sell.

BOOSTING RURAL HOUSING

Rural Scotland feels the effects of the housing emergency acutely. A lack

of homes exacerbates depopulation and holds back economic growth as businesses struggle to find housing for their workforce. Scottish Labour is determined to boost the supply of affordable homes in rural areas by:

- **Consolidating rural housing funds,** to maximise impact. We will explore options to expand eligibility, to increase uptake, and support employer-led initiatives to deliver rural homes where they are needed.
- **Ensuring 10 per cent of new homes are built in genuinely rural areas,** reviewing the classification of rural housebuilding so rural housing data and targets are adequately capturing the reality in rural areas.
- **Reviewing the Croft House Grant Scheme,** ensuring it supports delivery of the quality homes that crofting communities need.
- **Expanding the use of rural housing burdens,** to allow communities to buy back homes when they come up for

sale and protect rural housing stock by preventing homes being sold as second homes.

- **Working with rural employers and local authorities**, to crowd in funding and fast-track developments that build housing to attract and retain rural workforces, support job creation and provide the necessary homes for key workers.

DELIVERING THE DREAM OF HOMEOWNERSHIP

Scottish Labour believe that owning your own home should not be the privilege of the wealthy or those who can rely on their families for financial support. To help people who aspire to own their own home we will:

- **Help renters to save for a deposit**, setting aside more than 5,000 new mid-market rent homes for working people who want to save for their own home.
- **Reducing the amount of tax paid by first time home buyers**, increasing the

LBTT relief threshold to £200,000 to save first time buyers up to £1,100 off the cost of buying a home and ensuring 40 per cent pay nothing. The costs of this will be partly offset by increasing the rate of LBTT paid by non-UK residents.

- **Tackle the scale of empty and second homes**, to make the most of existing housing stock by closing tax loopholes, supporting councils to buy neglected and empty properties that blight neighbourhoods, and introducing compulsory sale and rental order powers.
- **Establish a £1 homes scheme**, bringing derelict homes back into use by selling them to homeowners who are committed to turning them back into homes that are lived in and loved.

TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

Scottish Labour is determined to end the status quo that allows rough sleeping to increase and leaves thousands of families without a home to call their own. We will

work towards ending homelessness by 2040 by:

- **Expanding modular home pilots**, as an alternative to expensive and unsuitable temporary accommodation, boosting the supply of quality housing in the areas most in need and ensuring families have safe, warm place to live while they wait for a permanent home.
- **Prioritising prevention**, ensuring a reformed Scottish Welfare Fund is directed towards measures that help people to maintain tenancies and avoid homelessness in the first place.
- **Eradicating rough sleeping**, with localised targets and interventions in high prevalence areas, and improved support for housing first schemes.
- **Creating an Ending Homelessness Unit**, to give national leadership, working cross-government to test and roll out successful interventions that deliver on our national objective to end homelessness by 2040.

QUALITY OF HOUSING

Safe, well-maintained homes are essential to our overall quality of life. No matter where or in what type of tenure people live, they should have homes that are safe, warm, and comfortable. Scottish Labour will improve the quality of Scotland's existing housing stock by:

- **Granting homeowners more control over factoring**, legislating more transparency over pricing and higher penalties including removal from the property factor register when factors breach their obligations. Our reforms will make it easier for residents to end factoring contracts or set up factoring cooperatives.
- **Improving tenement maintenance arrangements**, expediting progress on reform recommendations.
- **Speeding up cladding remediation**, expediting a workable "Responsible Developers' Scheme", reviewing the Building Safety Levy, and setting clear

targets and legal requirements for delivery of remediation.

- **Protect social tenants from damp and mould**, by fully implementing Awaab's Law for Scotland.
- **Widen eligibility for energy-efficiency support**, dropping the age threshold for the Warmer Homes Scotland scheme to 70 and increasing rural grant uplifts by £500.

The lack of affordable homes in rural areas is a critical issue. We need a Scottish Labour government committed to ensuring more affordable homes are built to secure the future of our communities.

Isla McCay, working in outdoor education

Edinburgh's housing emergency means people are priced out of buying and renting in the city. Scottish Labour will build 125,000 new homes across all tenures in the next five years.

James Dalglish, Edinburgh councillor

Protecting our natural environment

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- 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.
- Set clear nature targets, to outline a route to nature restoration.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- Returning Scottish Water to public service values, restricting executive bonuses, prioritising in-house delivery, and improving accountability to Parliament.

- **Establishing a Marine Recovery Fund, funded through developer contributions to deliver strategic marine and nature recovery.**
- **Create a national warm homes programme, with one-stop centres in communities offering advice on new technologies, and installation of energy efficiency measures.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Raising awareness of wildfire prevention, with public information campaigns and supporting education on environmental change in schools.**
- **Reward farmers for nature-friendly practices, incentivising nature restoration and recognising the environmental contributions already made by Scotland's farmers.**
- **Expanding the use of community heat and power networks, working in partnership to identify potential opportunities.**

One of Scotland's greatest assets is our land and natural environment. From the rugged mountains in the Highlands to the beauty of our National Parks, to the length and diversity of our coastline, to our historic woodlands and to the numerous green spaces within our cities and urban areas, Scotland has so much to offer. Yet, the climate crisis is accelerating in Scotland and around the world. Scottish Labour will take the action needed to achieve our net zero by 2045 ambitions and protect Scotland's natural environment for future generations.

REDUCING SCOTLAND'S EMISSIONS

The negative impacts of climate change are already being felt. Without action now, mitigations will cost more in the longterm. There has been insufficient progress in recent years so Scottish Labour will develop a clear and realistic route map to hit our emission reduction milestones. We will:

- **Create a national warm homes programme**, with one-stop centres

in communities to advise on new technologies, access to domestic solar, energy efficiency measures, financing, and trusted local installers to help support local jobs.

- **Expand the use of community heat and power networks**, working with local authorities, communities and local developers to identify potential areas and opportunities.
- **Continue the electrification of Scotland's railways**, developing a fast intercity rail corridor with shorter journey times to encourage use of public transport and reduce car traffic.
- **Support the expansion of renewable energy generation in Scotland**, cutting decision times and supporting grid build through planning reforms, as well as increasing community ownership of renewable energy generation.
- **Work with the aviation sector and heavy industry** on the development of low carbon fuel, including SAF and hydrogen-based alternatives.

NATURE RESTORATION AND LAND USE

Recent years have seen degradation of Scotland's key habitats and biodiversity. By working in partnership, we can ensure that our economic ambitions go hand-in-hand with efforts to protect Scotland's landscapes and reach net zero. To restore Scotland's land for the benefit and enjoyment of all we will:

- **Set clear nature targets**, using the powers from the Natural Environment (Scotland) Act to outline a route to nature restoration.
- **Prioritise the introduction of a new Marine Plan** with a spatial, as opposed to sector-specific, approach so there is clarity for offshore wind, fisheries and coastal communities on their roles and responsibilities in Scottish waters.
- **Establish a Marine Recovery Fund**, funded through developer contributions, to deliver strategic marine and nature recovery, while exploring an equivalent onshore model

and consolidating multiple funding streams for greatest impact.

- **Work in partnership to deliver sustainable deer management,** continuing incentive pilots and supporting community initiatives to supply venison to local markets.
- **Reward farmers for nature-friendly practices,** incentivising nature restoration and recognising the environmental contributions already made by Scotland's farmers and crofters through our modernisation of agriculture support payments.
- **Support sustainable and data-informed fisheries,** rolling out remote electronic monitoring and consulting on inshore marine management to protect fish stocks and marine environments.
- **Take a mixed seed approach to tree planting,** encouraging diverse woodlands, expanding native woodlands annually and balancing the

needs of the timber industry to get the right trees in the right places.

PROTECTING ANIMAL WELFARE

Scottish Labour have a proud track record of delivering progress on animal welfare and have consistently supported protections for all species. Scotland may have some of the highest animal welfare standards, but we cannot rest on our laurels. Scottish Labour will act to protect animals in Scotland by:

- **Introducing compulsory microchipping of cats**, to ensure that lost or stolen cats can be reunited with their owners and prevent needless rehoming.
- **Reviewing and consolidating wildlife legislation**, to strengthen and clarify wildlife and animal protection laws, reflecting the changes and developments made in the 20 years since Scottish Labour's Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006.

- **Banning the use of shock collars,** making clear that their use is illegal for training dogs and pets.
- **Developing a list of “permitted species” that can be kept as pets,** working to reduce the keeping of exotic animals in unsuitable domestic conditions.
- **Working in partnership with farmers to improve animal welfare,** with a strategy to target rural veterinary shortages and phase out the use of farrowing crates.

HELPING EVERYONE BUILD A GREENER FUTURE

When it comes to climate change everyone has a role to play, but that also means that government and business must step up to enable change. Scottish Labour will build a more circular economy and help everyone to play their part in making Scotland a greener and healthier place to live by:

- **Working with local authorities to improve recycling rates and reuse**

facilities, learning from the best practice and ensuring more recycling is processed in Scotland, not shipped elsewhere.

- **Tackling littering and waste from drinks' containers**, rolling out the deposit return scheme and introducing a small charge for single-use takeaway cups.
- **Reducing the destruction of unsold goods**, helping businesses to partner with local charities and distribution services like Multibank so goods help those in need.
- **Raising awareness of wildfire prevention**, with public information campaigns and supporting education on environmental change in schools.
- **Reviewing the roles and remit of nature and environment agencies**, to reduce duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy so that funding and policy development is focused on protecting Scotland's natural resources for the benefit of all.

CLEANING UP SCOTLAND'S WATER

Scotland is a water rich country, but we need to make sure supplies remain resilient into the future. Although Scottish Water is a publicly owned company, it isn't delivering for Scots as it should. Scottish Labour will end the creeping privatisation, and protect the availability and quality of Scotland's water by:

- **Returning Scottish Water to public service values**, restricting executive bonuses, prioritising in-house delivery, improving accountability to Parliament and taking a more constructive approach to industrial relations.
- **Preventing above-inflation hikes to household water bills**, while Scottish Water generates multi-million surpluses.
- **Increasing monitoring of sewage overflows as a priority**, boosting coverage to match levels elsewhere in the UK and improving transparency by making real-time data available to the public.

- **Protecting water sports participants,** expanding testing at water sports sites, reviewing the pollutants monitored and ensuring regulators hold polluters to account.
- **Commissioning a water scarcity plan,** ensuring Scotland's water needs and use are managed strategically and future proofed.
- **Promoting nature-based mitigations** which restore freshwater habitats and reduce the impact of flooding.

Tackling the climate emergency must be a priority for all politicians. Scottish Labour will deliver on climate targets without leaving communities behind.

Kate Blake, keen cyclist

A government that works for you

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- Reducing the number of quangos by at least a third to improve value for public money and cut waste and duplication.
- Tightening the rules around government legal action, so that taxpayers do not pick up the bill for political damage limitation.
- Publishing all government files relating to recent scandals, including the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- Creating a Scottish Treasury within government to get a grip of public spending and deliver value for public money.
- Inviting the Information Commissioner

to review government freedom of information practice to end the culture of cover up and secrecy.

- **Splitting the dual role of the Lord Advocate, so that there is clarity over the purpose of the role and a clear separation of powers.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Implementing the right of recall, so the public have the right to replace MSPs who do not uphold public standards.**
- **Reforming infrastructure delivery to end spiralling costs and delays to public projects.**
- **Establishing an economy focused sub-Cabinet, chaired by the First Minister and holding Ministers to account on how they are delivering economic growth in every region.**

Scottish Labour delivered devolution because we believed in having a Scottish Government that worked in the interests of the people of Scotland. Our Scottish Parliament was supposed to be a step towards a more democratic and accountable future, but that vision is being undermined by a government always looking for someone else to blame. This tired SNP government is out of ideas and squandering the opportunities of devolution. Under Scottish Labour, the era of bloated government which wastes taxpayers' money and hides behind a culture of secrecy will end. We will respect public money and deliver a government that works as hard as the people it serves.

RESPECT FOR TAXPAYERS' MONEY AND AN END TO WASTE

For too long working Scots have been forced to pay the price for the SNP's financial mismanagement and wasteful spending. Taxes have been hiked to substitute for economic growth, while

public services decline and spending on government projects spirals out of control. Years of emergency budgets have seen brutal in-year cuts and fiscal chaos.

Scottish Labour will end the short-termism and deliver value for taxpayers' money by:

- **Creating a Scottish Treasury within government** to get a grip of public spending, setting long-term and realistic funding plans with robust value for money tests and three-yearly spending reviews so that government spending delivers results for Scots.
- **Establishing a team for government efficiency**, working within the Scottish Treasury to make sure public services are fit for purpose, cutting the bloated costs of government, reducing duplication across external agencies, and ending wasteful spending so we can put more money back into people's pockets.
- **Publishing a charter for fiscal transparency**, committing the government to deliver consistent

presentation of budget figures, respect the role of the Scottish Fiscal Commission, and be open about the costs of government legislation so government spending plans can be properly scrutinised.

- **Tightening the rules around government legal action**, with new public interest tests in the Ministerial Code so that taxpayers do not pick up the bill for political damage limitation.
- **Reforming infrastructure delivery to end spiralling costs and delays to public projects**, modernising land procurement and delivering stronger central planning.
- **Banning excessive bonuses for public executives**, linking any performance payments to achievement of financial objectives and value for public money.

SMALLER GOVERNMENT, COMMITTED TO DELIVERY

Compared to a decade ago, Scotland has fewer teachers, police officers and fire

fighters but more Scottish Government officials than ever before. An expensive labyrinth of public bodies, executive agencies and quangos shields the government from the consequences of its failure. Instead of creating more red tape and jobs for bureaucrats, Scottish Labour will cut back the bloated government operation and refocus resources on delivery, starting at the top. We will:

- **Reduce the number of Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers**, to deliver better cross-directorate working and reduce the government salary bill.
- **Establish an economy focused sub-Cabinet**, chaired by the First Minister and holding Ministers to account on how they are delivering economic growth in every region of Scotland.
- **Create a Delivery Unit at the heart of the First Minister's office**, driving cross-government action to deliver economic growth, shorter NHS waiting lists, more homes and better public services.

- **Conduct annual reviews of government working groups,** scrapping inactive and ineffective taskforces that do not deliver change and consolidating overlapping remits.
- **Reduce external public bodies and quangos by at least a third,** starting with our plans to streamline the economic agencies and reduce health boards, redeploying skilled workforces to improve delivery and value for public money.

ENDING SECRET SCOTLAND

Decades of SNP control has cultivated a government obsessed with denial and deflection, preferring concealment over action. The people of Scotland deserve a government that is open, honest and accountable, where effort is spent on improving services, not on protecting those in power from scrutiny. Scottish Labour will end the culture of cover up and secrecy by:

- **Publishing all government files relating to recent scandals**, including the Salmond inquiry, Ferguson Marine ferries and the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital.
- **Inviting the Information Commissioner to review government freedom of information practice** and make clear, independent recommendations for faster decisions and proper compliance.
- **Establishing an independent ethics advisor** to uphold standards across government, with a remit that includes special advisors and senior civil servants.
- **Ensuring that Ministers are fully held to account** for breaches of the Ministerial Code.

IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY

Holyrood needs to be able to scrutinise government decisions and properly represent the will of the Scottish people. Scottish Labour will restore faith and trust

in the ability of the Scottish Parliament to hold power to account by:

- **Tightening the rules on second jobs and lobbying regulations,** to ensure that MSPs are not profiting or distracted from their work representing constituents.
- **Implementing the right of recall,** legislating so the public have the right to replace MSPs who do not uphold public standards in advance of the next election.
- **Strengthening the authority of committees to compel witnesses,** both to submit evidence and appear under oath in certain circumstances.
- **Supporting elections for committee convenors** so that convenors have a mandate from the whole Parliament, not just their political party.
- **Introducing parliamentary privilege in Holyrood** so that MSPs raising issues are given the same protection as MPs.

- **Splitting the dual role of the Lord Advocate**, so that there is clarity over the purpose of the role and separation between Scotland's chief prosecutor and the Scottish Government's legal advisor.

Openness, honesty and transparency must be at the heart of government. A focus on learning and delivering, not hiding mistakes and failures.

Maureen Dynes, health campaigner

An outward looking country

Scottish Labour will:

FIX THE MESS BY

- **Assessing the government's existing international offices for value for money and delivery.**
- **Advancing the Glasgow airport rail link as a national priority, finally delivering a modern metro connection from the city centre to the airport.**
- **Carrying out robust human rights due diligence checks on business support funding for defence, to take account of a product's end use.**

GET THE BASICS RIGHT BY

- **Establishing a Major Events Bureau, to position Scotland as a leading destination for international events.**
- **Driving the expansion of international air routes, with a route development fund.**

- **Treating the food and drink sector as a strategic economic asset, building on the strength of whisky and salmon.**

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE BY

- **Promoting Brand Scotland around the world, building stronger connections with the Scottish diaspora and boosting exports.**
- **Hosting an annual Scottish Economic Forum to showcase Scottish produce and projects to investors and international markets.**
- **Establishing an aid matching scheme, to double the generous donations made by the Scottish public to humanitarian causes.**

Our country is famous around the world for its innovation, the quality of our produce, the beauty of our landscapes, and the welcome of our people, but we want Scotland to also be known as a good place to do business. Scotland has always played its part on the world stage because we know that we can achieve so much more in partnership with others than we can if we only look inwards. Scottish Labour is determined that even in turbulent global times we can make Scotland a reliable, well-connected partner and a destination of choice for international tourists and investors.

PROMOTING BRAND SCOTLAND TO GROW THE ECONOMY

Scotland has the incredible advantage of possessing a highly regarded national brand which we should be leveraging to create economic opportunities. Scottish Labour believes it is time to stop simply selling Scotland to the Scots and start promoting our country around the world.

We are determined to be a government that acts as a dealmaker, boosting our exports and attracting new investment by:

- **Hosting an annual Scottish Economic Forum**, bringing together Scottish businesses to showcase Scottish produce and projects to investors and international markets.
- **Sending Scottish businesses on trade delegations**, collaborating with the UK Government's vast trade network and embassies to promote Brand Scotland, building connections and opportunities for Scottish-specific business.
- **Reviewing the Scottish Government's existing international offices**, assessing them for value for money and ensuring they are located where they can best support Scotland's export growth.
- **Building stronger connections with the Scottish diaspora**, creating a strong network of informal ambassadors for Scotland and our exports around the world.

- **Supporting efforts to build closer relationships with the EU**, building on the progress made by the UK Labour Government and ensuring Scotland benefits from future agreements.

BUILDING OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY

Scotland is one of the top tourist destinations in Europe but there is still a lot of room for expansion. The variety of activities and cultural experiences we can offer provides opportunities to create prosperity and growth in every part of our country. Scottish Labour is determined to deliver excellence for visitors, working in partnership to build a tourism strategy that:

- **Establishes a Major Events Bureau**, strengthening the Edinburgh festivals, supporting the expansion of the Scottish Events Campus and positioning Scotland as leading destinations for world-class sport, culture, and international conferences.

- **Markets Scotland as a premium food and drink destination**, leveraging the strength of whisky and salmon while treating the wider food and drink sector as a strategic economic asset.
- **Champions 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.
- **Drives the expansion of international air routes**, with a route development fund that supports Scottish airports to establish more direct flights to North America and Asia as a priority.
- **Advances the Glasgow airport rail link as a national priority**, finally delivering a modern metro connection from the city centre to the airport and ending decades of delay.
- **Works with the Dundee Eden project**, helping to build on Dundee's reputation as a creative and cultural destination.

- **Protects Scotlands historic assets, reforming Historic Environment Scotland so it is fit for purpose** and ensuring funding is properly used to maintain Scottish sites.

SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

In turbulent global times, acting in solidarity is even more important. It was a Scottish Labour government that first introduced Scotland's voluntary contributions to international development work, in recognition of Scotland's outward facing and internationalist outlook. We will continue this work, making sure that the contribution Scotland makes is as effective as it can be in tackling humanitarian crises around the world.

We will:

- **Maintain the international development budget**, ensuring that funding for humanitarian aid is only delivered through not-for-profit organisations and is targeted at areas where we have Scottish partnerships in place.

- **Protect Scotland's commitment to being a Fair Trade Nation**, promoting ethical trade and workers' rights around the world, as well as at home.
- **Carry out robust human rights due diligence checks on business support funding for defence**, to take account of product end use and ensure public money is not connected to products used in human rights abuses around the world.

We also know that people in Scotland care deeply about what happens globally. Many Scots have welcomed refugees who are fleeing persecution and conflict into their homes and neighbourhoods. To back their commitment and help build stronger diverse communities we will:

- **Establish an aid matching scheme**, so that government contributions to international development can double the generous donations made by the Scottish public to specific projects.
- **Expand the availability of ESOL courses in Scotland**, so that those seeking

refuge in our country are given support to learn English to help them integrate and build lives here.

- **Support the passporting of skills for refugees**, working within devolved powers and with the UK Government to help skilled and highly qualified individuals find work and contribute to Scottish society.

Scotland has a unique place in the world. A Scottish Labour government will promote our country around the world, boost our exports and attract new investment.
Mary McGowne, business founder.

Paying for our promises

DELIVERING FISCAL COMPETENCE

The next Parliament must mark a change from the chaotic decision making and short-termism that have characterised the SNP's fiscal management in the last five years. Public services have suffered from consecutive in-year cuts while a lack of focus on economic and industrial strategy has impacted on revenues. Scotland's finances face an economic performance gap, equivalent to a loss of £800m in 2026/27 alone.

Scotland's public finances need change.

To fix the mess of the past five years, get the basics right for taxpayers and build a better future for all, Scottish Labour will take a new approach. Delivered by our new Scottish Treasury, it will be guided by the following objectives.

1. Growing businesses, wages and the economy must be a top priority

Supporting business to attract investment, grow, and create well-paying jobs also increases individuals' incomes. Within the fiscal framework, improving Scotland's comparative economic performance and median salaries within the wider UK also increases the revenues available for spending on Scottish public services.

Combined, we estimate that Scottish Labour's economic proposals have the potential to increase Scottish GDP by between 2.1%-2.4% over five years. This could close the economic performance gap and deliver between £600m-£700m more to spend on public services by 2030/31.

This economic growth would be delivered through our plans to transform skills and employability, overhaul planning, increase innovation, and improve productivity through adoption of new technologies. This would all be underpinned by our new industrial strategy and a relentless focus

on business growth from the Cabinet down to refocused government agencies.

Our ambition is to reduce tax rates on Scottish taxpayers over the course of the Parliament, but this will be contingent on delivering growth and closing the economic performance gap. Any initial reforms will focus on taxpayers who face the highest marginal tax rates as a result of the interaction between UK and Scottish taxes.

We will work with the business sector and local authorities to develop our local business levy as a replacement for current unfair business rates. Changes would be revenue neutral but better balanced to support retail and hospitality in town centres, and promote local economic growth.

2. Government funding can and should work harder

While the SNP have set out public sector reform plans, there has been a lack of

focus on how those efficiencies will deliver improved results for public service delivery. We anticipate that our reforms could unlock up to £200m to support spending by 2030/31.

Our new Scottish Treasury will cut wasteful spending and ensure that every penny delivers for the Scottish people. Cutting quangos by a third will reduce duplication across government and ensure decisions can be implemented swiftly.

Reforms, such as NHS funding following the patient and speeding up digitisation work in the justice and health sectors will unlock productivity improvements. Preventative spending will also reduce costs elsewhere, such as supporting young people into work or improving social care to reduce delayed discharge.

Economic agencies will be focused on crowding in private investment and delivering returns for the public purse. A new approach to procurement will ensure public money supports local jobs and stricter central coordination of critical

infrastructure projects will end spiralling costs and delays.

3. Agreement over long-term funding plans is needed for stability

After years of disruption, organisations reliant on Scottish Government funding need stability. The return to a cycle of three-year spending reviews at UK level has unlocked the opportunity to make similar settlements in Scotland and bring greater certainty to public spending.

Local authorities and tertiary education will be key partners in delivering economic growth, so an early priority of a Scottish Labour government will be to put these sectors on a genuinely stable footing by negotiating new sustainable funding agreements for the long term.

Predictable funding also allows for better long-term planning of services. Our New Deal for the Third Sector will support better value for money, with multi-year funding settlements and agreements on shared

outcomes. Using long-term agreements, we will also establish a sustainable and coherent approach to public sector pay as required by the Scottish Fiscal Commission.

Despite repeated commitments to scrap or reform council tax by the SNP, 19 years on it remains in place with valuations unchanged since the early 90s. Progressive reforms are required but any transition will need buy-in from across the Parliament. A Scottish Labour government will work cross-party to build political and public consensus on how reforms can be fairly designed and implemented.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

A productive partnership with the UK Government can open more opportunities for Scotland. Hence, Scottish Labour's proposals for an industrial strategy that builds on Scotland's strengths within the UK plan, utilising the UK Government's global networks to promote Scottish produce and working with GB Energy and

the National Wealth Fund to deliver a fair energy transition.

Scotland's Fiscal Framework is also due for review in 2028. We will work closely with the UK Government in advance of this to ensure that any review and reform delivers for Scotland. An initial priority will be ensuring that the Scottish National Investment Bank is designated a public finance institution under the UK Treasury's Financial Transactions Control Framework.

PRIORITY SPENDING

The policy commitments set out in this manifesto are all funded from within the existing forecasts for the Scottish budget. Where commitments extend beyond the Spending Review period, the Scottish Government's likely resources have been estimated based on spending in the final year of the Spending Review, appreciating that eventual funding may differ. Further revenue raised through economic growth or realising savings will be additional

to the planned spending on our policy commitments.

Over the next Parliament our priority areas of spending include:

To deliver an NHS there when Scots need it, we will raise Health and Social Care spending to at least £25bn by 2030/31. As part of this we will:

- Invest over £200m annually to reduce waiting times and improve productivity.
- Increase social care pay to £15 per hour.
- Spend £680m on digital and technological improvements.
- By 2030/31 we anticipate that our productivity reforms could release an additional £90m and reduce spend on delayed discharge from the current £440m annual cost.

To transform education into a system that sets young people up to succeed we will:

- Spend £630m on increasing classroom teachers by 1,500 and recruiting 2,000 education recovery teachers.
- Make permanent the annual budget of £130m for Pupil Equity Funding and ensure it is focussed on tackling poverty and improving attainment.
- Increase funding for colleges by over £120m to deliver employability schemes and more apprenticeships.

To build the homes Scotland needs and tackle the housing emergency we will:

- Commit £5.3bn to fund the delivery of 52,300 affordable homes, including 20,300 mid-market rent homes.
- Commit at least £30m more towards interventions to prevent homelessness.
- Combine all funds for rural housing.

To get transport that works for people and the economy we will:

- Invest £350m to repair roads and fix potholes.
- Commit up to £2bn to upgrading rail infrastructure and delivering faster intercity travel.
- Set aside £200m to support franchising of local bus services.
- Create a £5m air route development fund.

To deliver investment into our economy we will:

- Direct at least £220m annually into government backed business loans.
- Create a £15m digital adoption fund.
- Create a £100m Community Energy Fund from ringfenced ScotWind revenue.
- Spend £30m on a Creative Entrepreneurs Allowance.

This election is a straight choice

A choice between more of the same SNP failure or change with Scottish Labour.

A choice between a government that has run out of road or a government ready to get to work.

A choice between more broken promises or a serious plan to fix the mess, get the basics right, and build a better future for our country.

After 20 years of SNP government, Scotland cannot afford more of the same. We cannot afford more long waiting lists, more pressure on family budgets, more young people locked out of home ownership, more frustration at public services that are not there when people need them, and more waste at the heart of government.

Scottish Labour offers a different path.

A plan to cut NHS waiting times, end the 8am rush for a GP and bring back the family doctor. A plan to make life easier for working parents through better childcare and breakfast clubs in every school.

A plan to create jobs and opportunity through 9,000 new apprenticeships and backing Scottish industry. A plan to build 125,000 new homes, fix our roads, put community police back at the heart of neighbourhoods, and cut quangos by a third so taxpayers know their money is being spent well.

This is a manifesto for people who want politics to make a difference again. For people who want a government that is on their side. For people who believe Scotland can do better than this.

I believe that too.

I believe Scotland's best days are ahead of us, but only if we have the courage to choose change.

That is what this election is about.

If you want a government that will work

every day to deliver for the hard-working majority, vote for it.

If you want a government that will fix the mess, get the basics right and build a better future, vote for it.

The SNP have had 20 years in charge, they don't deserve another 5 years. It's time for change.

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

Anas Sarwar

Leader of the Scottish Labour Party



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