



# North East Scotland needs change

North East Scotland is overflowing with huge potential but after 20 years of SNP government too many people across the region are being held back.

## It's time for change.

Scottish Labour has a plan to fix the mess, get the basics right and build a better future for everyone in the North East.

## Making life more affordable

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

- ✔ **Committing to no income tax rate rises** for five years, with the ambition to lower taxes as we get the economy growing.
- ✔ **Widening eligibility for energy-efficiency grants**, so grants for rural homes are increased by £500 and 3,000 more older households can access funding for home upgrades.
- ✔ **Introducing breakfast clubs in all primary schools**, helping parents get to work on time and ensuring no child starts the day hungry.
- ✔ **Cutting childcare costs for working parents** with two weeks of summer holiday clubs and increasing the value of tax free childcare to £3,000 per child.
- ✔ **Keeping down the cost of public transport**, preventing a return to peak rail fares and maintaining free bus travel for under-22s and older people.
- ✔ **Reducing tax for first time buyers**, increasing the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax relief threshold to £200,000, saving first time buyers up to £1,100 off the cost of buying a home.
- ✔ **Preventing above inflation hikes to water bills** while Scottish Water generates multi-million pound surpluses.

## An NHS there when Scots need it

Scottish Labour will always defend the NHS and we will make sure it is delivering for North East Scotland by:

- ✔ **Driving down NHS waiting lists**, with funding following the patient so that anyone from the North East who is willing to travel can be offered treatment wherever capacity is available.
- ✔ **Ending the 8am rush for a GP appointment** and bringing back the family doctor so everyone can get a GP appointment within 48 hours when they need one.
- ✔ **Creating new neighbourhood health hubs** so people across the North East can access all their local health services in one place.
- ✔ **Establishing 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.
- ✔ **Protecting services in underserved areas**, working with GPs to secure provision in rural and Deep End practices.
- ✔ **Launching an emergency mental health response service**, so that people in mental health crisis get specialist NHS care, not merely a police response.
- ✔ **Catching cancer earlier** with modernised screening and investment in new AI-enabled scanners so that waiting times targets are finally met.
- ✔ **Cracking down on poorly run care homes**, prioritising more regular inspections and improving transparency for residents and their families so quality services are easier to identify.
- ✔ **Investing in alcohol and substance misuse recovery**, ensuring funding decisions are informed by voices from frontline services.

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## Kickstarting the economy

A Scottish Labour government will unlock North East Scotland's huge economic potential by:

- ✓ **Delivering a new, single industrial strategy** to provide certainty for businesses and investors across the North East.
- ✓ **Planning for the energy sector**, 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.
- ✓ **Improving 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.
- ✓ **Abolishing the unfair business rates system**, replacing it with a new local business levy designed with business to incentivise local investment, tackle empty properties, and encourage entrepreneurship.
- ✓ **Backing the transition in the North East**, delivering £40m of funding over the Parliament for Opportunity North East and the Energy Transition Zone in Aberdeen.
- ✓ **Speeding up planning decisions**, transforming the planning hub into a national planning agency and reforming planning rules to take account of economic potential.
- ✓ **Accelerating internet connectivity**, prioritising the deployment of full-fibre broadband and working with the mobile network operators to roll-out 5G in underserved areas.

## Developing skills and creating good jobs

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

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

## Setting our young people up to succeed

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

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

## Stronger communities

Scottish Labour will work with local people to improve local services and make North East Scotland a great place to live by:

- ✓ **Fixing the potholes in North East Scotland**, repairing roads with a national £350m pothole fund.
- ✓ **Delivering fair funding for local services**, agreeing a new funding formula for local government in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee City and Moray.
- ✓ **Giving people in North East Scotland a say over service closures**, requiring councils to consult whenever they plan to shut local libraries, sports and leisure facilities.
- ✓ **Supporting vibrant high streets and town centres**, ensuring online retailers and large distribution warehouses pay their fair share of business rates and levies.
- ✓ **Simplifying 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.
- ✓ **Redefining 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.

## A safer Scotland

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

- ✓ **Returning police officers back to the front line** and giving every neighbourhood a named community and crime prevention officer.

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- ✔ **Increasing the value of Antisocial Behaviour Fines**, meaning those who make communities feel less safe can face fines of up to £500.
- ✔ **Legislating for tougher regulation on the sale of all knives**, to prevent shoplifting.
- ✔ **Crushing illegal e-bikes**, using drone technology to track and trace unlicensed bikes for seizure.
- ✔ **Restoring the Cashback for Communities Youth Work Fund**, with £1m dedicated to funding local approaches to youth work.
- ✔ **Prosecuting shoplifting and cracking down on drug dealing**, properly resourcing Police Scotland's organised crime teams.
- ✔ **Continuing funding for Rape Crisis and Women's Aid**, ensuring resources are delivered to local services which support victims.

## Homes for all

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

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

## Protecting our natural environment

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

- ✔ **Creating a warm homes programme**, with one-stop centres in communities offering advice on new technologies, and installation of energy efficiency measures.
- ✔ **Increasing monitoring of sewage overflows**, boosting coverage to match levels elsewhere in the UK, to ensure that rivers such as the Dee, Don and Spey can be protected for generations to come.
- ✔ **Rewarding farmers for nature-friendly practices**, incentivising nature restoration and

recognising the environmental contributions already made by Scotland's farmers.

- ✔ **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.
- ✔ **Introducing a new Marine Plan**, so there is clarity for all industries within Scottish waters and a commitment to develop 40GW in offshore wind by 2040.
- ✔ **Establishing a Marine Recovery Fund**, funded through developer contributions, to deliver strategic marine and nature recovery.

## A government that works for you

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

- ✔ **Ending government waste by cutting a third of quangos** to improve delivery and value for public money.
- ✔ **Implementing the right of recall**, so people in North East Scotland have the right to replace MSPs who do not uphold public standards.
- ✔ **Passing a Local Democracy Act**, to push power out of Holyrood and give people in North East Scotland more control over public services and the right to elect a regional mayor.

## An outward looking country

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

- ✔ **Driving the expansion of international air routes**, with a route development fund that supports Scottish airports.
- ✔ **Working with the Dundee Eden project** to help build on Dundee's reputation as a creative and cultural destination.
- ✔ **Marketing 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.
- ✔ **Establishing a Major Events Bureau**, positioning venues across Scotland as leading destinations for world-class sport, culture, and international conferences.

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

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

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