

A better Scotland needs a bolder Holyrood



#GREENHOLYROOD. MANIFESTO 2016



Scotland can be greener

We believe that **Scotland can** be fairer, greener and healthier. We believe that the Scottish Parliament can be so much bolder in meeting the ambitions of the people of Scotland.

The Scottish Greens have the people and the policies to make this happen. Our candidates have a solid track record of making a difference inside and outside Holyrood. We bring fresh, new, bold ideas to Parliament. We will work constructively with others who share our aims. Holyrood – and Scotland – needs diverse politics and progressive champions to hold the biggest parties to account.

Scotland can care for all our people

With more Green MSPs, we will fight for a “Carers Wage” that values people who care for young and old; and we will welcome people fleeing conflict abroad.

Scotland can create over 200,000 new jobs

With more Green MSPs we will push for and deliver over 200,000 jobs in clean, green industries; and we can help small businesses, social enterprises and employee-owned ventures to flourish. These are real jobs, here to stay and not dependent on the short-term whims of global finance.

Scotland can provide good homes for all

With more Green MSPs we can eradicate fuel poverty, raise standards in private housing, and make private rents affordable.

Scotland can unlock the power in our communities

With more Green MSPs we will push for real change in who owns and controls land, in community and public ownership of energy, and giving people the same rights as developers in planning decisions. It’s your country after all.

Scotland can guarantee a future for our young people

With Green MSPs we can open up college places and apprenticeships, and we can commit to a job, training or education for every school-leaver through a Scotland Guarantee.

Scotland can be bolder

Scotland’s Parliament can be bolder. No one party can have all the answers – diversity adds quality. So don’t pin all your hopes on one party.

#GREENHOLYROOD VOTE GREEN 2016



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1. Scotland can create over 200,000 jobs

Scotland has a strong and diverse economy that must be secured for the future. We know our economy should offer security, jobs and decent livelihoods for all, and not pursue growth for growth's sake. To enjoy a prosperous future we must begin the transition to a sustainable green economy, one that prioritises fair pay and investment in low-carbon industry, and which breaks from the economics of austerity.

Our top policies in this area are to:

Do business differently. Green MSPs will push for fair pay, decent jobs, workers' rights and opportunities for cooperative enterprise.

Create over 200,000 jobs in sustainable industries. We will support Scotland's energy industries to begin a large-scale transition into renewable energy generation, design and research.

Support people into work. We call for better support to help people find work and an end to the sanctions that punish those who can't find a job.

Scottish Greens will campaign to reverse government cuts to public services, and instead invest in Scotland's people. With more Green MSPs we can support action to deliver thousands of jobs in clean, green industries. We can do business differently, supporting small businesses, social enterprises and employee-owned ventures to flourish. And we can build an economy for people, not growth at any cost.

Scotland can do business differently:

Business models that deliver more. Green MSPs will support social enterprises, cooperatives and employee-owned businesses to be at the heart of the economy. These business models deliver not just profits but social and environmental improvements too. Over 112,000 people are working in Scotland's social enterprises, with 60% of these led by women. Employee-owned businesses are delivering increased sales, employment, profits and productivity. Greens will support these business models that challenge the status quo, promote equality and deliver more for Scotland.

Fair pay. We believe everyone should be paid a wage that lifts them out of poverty, and that nobody should be paid less because of their gender. We will campaign to make government business support available only to those companies who plan to pay the Living Wage, avoid zero-hours contracts, recognise trade unions, reduce the gap between the highest and lowest paid, pay women and men equally and are environmentally responsible.

Trade unions. Unions are vital partners in a fair economy. We completely oppose the UK Government's attacks on trade unionism and will campaign for employment, health and safety, equality and trade union law to be devolved. Scottish Greens will continue to support trade union campaigns to deliver jobs with decent pay and conditions. We want to see unions play a bigger role in planning for Scotland's economic future and we will promote direct employee involvement in all levels of work, such as management, business development and innovation.

Scotland can become a jobs-rich, low carbon economy:

Low carbon investment. Our economy must deliver decent livelihoods while responding to the challenges of climate change. The transition to a jobs-rich, low carbon economy requires an end to austerity and investment at every level – from large offshore renewables to warmer homes in communities across Scotland.

Offshore skills. Scotland has world-leading offshore engineering skills and a wealth of natural resources around our shores. With skills in sub-sea engineering concentrated in Aberdeen we have an opportunity to excel in offshore wind, tidal and wave energy. The Scottish Greens' Jobs in Scotland's New Economy report, published in 2015, demonstrates how to create over 200,000 new jobs by 2035, compared with the 156,000 jobs currently provided by the Scottish fossil fuel extraction industry. Green MSPs will support measures to increase access to new jobs for groups underrepresented in science, technology and engineering, including women and people from minority ethnic communities.

Sustainable industries. Green MSPs will support Scotland's diverse economy with investment in sustainable industries and services that improve quality of life and reduce carbon emissions. We will promote sustainable expansion in areas such as food production, clean chemical sciences, digital and creative industries, medical and life sciences, construction, engineering, forestry and the energy industry. We will support development and sustainable practices in sectors such as research and development, independent retail, tourism and sports, waste reuse and recycling, shipbuilding, textiles and design.

Local banks, credit unions and local currencies. Social enterprises and employee-owned companies need finance and the financial institutions to match. Credit unions offer a realistic alternative to the traditional banking sector for many individuals and communities throughout Scotland, providing affordable, community-based, socially responsible lending and investment. Green MSPs will campaign to support credit unions and local banks to create a network of accountable finance institutions. These banking institutions would be more resilient than the 'too-big-to-fail' banks of today. We will also explore whether local currencies can encourage local trading activity to support independent retailers and small high street traders.

A public sector drive for sustainability. Along with companies and trade unions, we believe local authorities and enterprise agencies have vital roles in supporting a low carbon transition and securing future jobs. We will expand Scottish Enterprise's remit to supporting an economy that strengthens communities and delivers sustainability. We will create an economic development agency for rural areas not covered by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, including the South of Scotland. We support empowering local authorities to issue low-carbon infrastructure bonds; divest public pension funds from fossil fuels, tobacco and firearms; deliver City Deals based on sustainable industries; and create local energy companies to deliver clean energy, cheaper heating, and plough profits back into public services.

Scotland can support people into work:

Equal access. Too many people are marginalised in the labour market including unpaid carers, disabled people, women, LGBTI+ people and those from minority ethnic groups. Green MSPs will support calls for a Gender Equality in Business scheme to incentivise gender-sensitive employment practices, and public procurement laws that allow decisions to be based on sustainability, equality, community benefit and local supply, not just the short-term cost. Greens will also back a non-permanent commission to tackle gender and racial occupational segregation in the labour market and lay out the case for the devolution of equalities legislation.

Scotland Guarantee. Green MSPs will campaign for a Scotland Guarantee of a job, training or education for every school-leaver. Latest figures show 8% of school leavers left school without a job or more education, but this rises to 15% for pupils from the poorest areas. Local authority and Scottish Government action, such as the Edinburgh Guarantee and Opportunities for All, has helped reduce that number but too many young people are still left without the opportunity to work or study. Green MSPs will campaign for better opportunities for all young people leaving school.

Support for employment. Powers to support people unemployed for a year or more will be devolved to Scotland over the next Parliament. The largest scheme, the Work Programme, has failed to deliver for the people who need it and now faces a funding cut of 87%. Green MSPs will push for a new scheme delivered on a non-profit basis, contracted locally to the public and third sectors, which recognises the value of voluntary work and makes a genuine investment in participants' skills. Such a scheme would address barriers to accessing work on account of age, disability, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Greens will also push for devolution and expansion of the Access to Work scheme that supports disabled people to start or remain in work.

Stand against benefit sanctions. We believe sanctions that punish people for unemployment have no place in a fair system. The sanctions regime is reserved but the UK Department for Work and Pensions relies on information from Work Programme providers to know who to sanction. Green MSPs will campaign for new provider contracts to include a clause preventing them from sharing information with DWP that would lead to a benefit sanction, thus ending sanctions for a significant number of benefit claimants in Scotland.



2. Scotland can care for all our people

There are over 788,000 unpaid carers in Scotland in addition to those employed in the social care sector, providing invaluable daily support to people of all generations. Care work is essential for our society and economy, but frequently this is undervalued and underpaid. Better conditions are needed for both professional care workers and unpaid carers attending to family and friends. Green MSPs will fight for greater recognition of Scotland's carers and push for increased financial and practical support.

Our top policies are:

A Living Wage Plus. We want to raise the basic rate of pay for all social care staff.

Increase the Carer's Allowance. We support an increase to the Carer's Allowance to recognise the value of unpaid care.

Child-friendly society. We will push to improve maternity and paternity benefits and provide high-quality childcare.

There is a vast mismatch between the value of care and the support carers receive; Scottish Greens want to recognise the humanity people demonstrate every day by caring for people. We want professional caring to be valued and considered an attractive career and to reward unpaid care. But we also want to extend our compassion across borders and be part of a Scotland that welcomes people fleeing conflict abroad.

Scotland can care for carers:

Better pay for caring. People who care are undervalued and underpaid. Social care workers do hard and vital work in people's homes, care homes and every community – but it remains one of the lowest paid sectors, fuelling the gender pay gap. Green MSPs will campaign for all care and support workers to be paid significantly above the Living Wage financed by progressive taxation not care charges. Earlier this year Green councillors in City of Edinburgh Council proposed a funded plan to pay a 'Living Wage Plus' of £9 an hour to social care staff. Green MSPs will campaign for this to be introduced across Scotland to help local authorities recruit the best staff and retain those with experience.

And better conditions. Better conditions for staff are a vital foundation for a better social care service, fully supporting professionals to put the needs of those being cared for first. Green MSPs will demand improved working conditions for social care workers, such as paid travel time, sick leave, skills training and an end to 'Zero Hours' care worker contracts.

Helping unpaid carers. Scotland has an estimated 788,000 people providing unpaid care to family members and friends. More than half of working-age carers juggle paid employment with caring. Female carers are particularly affected by the financial cost of giving up work, refusing promotions or reducing their hours of employment. Green MSPs will fight for a better deal for carers. Power to increase the Carer's Allowance will soon be devolved to the Scottish Parliament and Greens will campaign for a 50% increase in payments to £93.15 per week. Young carers and student carers also need financial support and we will explore introducing a Young Carer's Grant.

A fair Carer's Allowance. We will also support a redesign of the Carer's Allowance to value care, tackle financial stress and reduce paperwork – this should include a lower threshold for hours of care and a top-up for people who care for more than one person. Any increase in payments will require a fair settlement with the UK Government and local authorities to guarantee such an increase does not reduce other benefits payments or increase care charges. We will press for clear guidance to local authorities when assessing income to determine non-residential care charges. We advocate the exclusion of Carer's Allowance from such income assessments, so that no carer must spend their allowance on these services.

Carers' rights. New carers' legislation requires local authorities to identify every carer's needs and create an individual support plan. Green MSPs will campaign for adequate resources to implement this and to help make sure those needs can be met with good quality support such as replacement care, short breaks, health checks and concessionary travel for carers on income support. Young carers also need extra support and we want to ensure their voices are heard in any discussion of carers' rights. We will also back the creation of an independent social care tribunal system to help carers and those they care for to realise their existing rights.

No pension poverty. A pension should provide a guarantee for people in retirement. Green MSPs will campaign for a state pension that enables everyone to live with dignity. We will push for a Scottish supplement to be paid to all those not receiving the full State Pension, with the costs offset through reduced Pension Credit uptake reclaimed from the UK. 1 in 5 Scots has a financial interest in local government pensions. Greens will support unions to protect the interests of workers and we will make the case to lift restrictions on funds that choose to invest in local infrastructure such as social housing. Private pensions remain reserved but we will support campaigns to ensure the best deal possible for people in retirement.

Scotland can welcome refugees:

Welcome to Scotland. Scotland can welcome refugees with open arms. We will continue to campaign for the UK Government to accept more refugees and asylum seekers. Scotland has the space and communities to open to people in need of a home and we will support calls for resources to support community, civil society and charity action to aid integration.

New Scots. Green MSPs will push for a bolder Scottish strategy for 'new Scots' based on dignity and respect and built on consultation with refugees, local communities and other organisations such as housing and healthcare providers. This strategy should address people's physical and mental health needs, provide appropriate housing, maintain asylum seekers' skills for work and provide transition grants to help people build a new life as Scots.

Safe route to the UK. We want an asylum system which treats people with dignity not contempt. Green MSPs will support campaigns to create a safe and legal route to the UK, limit detention to circumstances where a UK citizen would also be detained, and close Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre. Detention should never be imposed on those who might suffer additional harm due to their age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, pregnancy, health, or experience of rape or torture.

Scotland can be a child-friendly nation:

Fighting child poverty. UNICEF ranks child-wellbeing in the UK as worse than all our nearest neighbours and levels of child poverty are a national disgrace. Compared with 2010, the UK Government has cut pregnancy and child-related benefits across the UK by £1.5 billion per year

and the Institute for Fiscal studies forecasts a massive increase in child poverty in Scotland, with up to 100,000 more children living in poverty in 2020 than in 2012. We will continue to campaign against benefit cuts and push to fund health visitors and midwives to work with families to claim all the financial support they are entitled to. The Healthier, Wealthier Children project in Glasgow helped parents, the majority of whom were lone parents, gain an average of £3,000 in financial benefits over a year and a half. We support the Getting It Right For Every Child approach to child wellbeing and policies to give children a healthy start in life.

Improving early years education. Green MSPs will help tackle educational inequality at the earliest stage by working with local authorities to deliver meaningful access to a GTCS-qualified teacher in every nursery and 20 hours early-years education per week. Greens will focus on delivering high quality early years education that is child-centred and flexible enough to be useful for parents who work or study part-time. We recognise that nurseries also play a vital role in tackling women's underemployment and access to education, and we support efforts to strengthen such support.

A compassionate care system. Scotland's young people in care need a system of support based on compassion and care, not just risk-averse protection. Their voices must be central to determining the kind of support they need. All young people should have a planned, supported transition out of the care system, be supported in education and have a right to return to care if needed. The care system must be adequately funded to ensure help is pro-actively available before a crisis in a young person's life develops and we will support ways to provide financial support to kinship care families at the beginning of a placement. Scottish Greens believe there should be parity of support, based on need, for all care leavers whether they are looked after at home, in kinship care or in rented accommodation.

Scotland can create real social security:

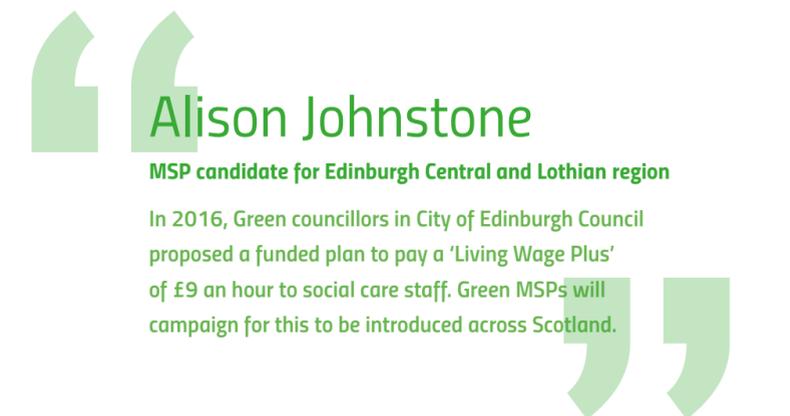
A caring social security system. Two decades of welfare reform has warped our social security system, making it unfair and in some cases fostering insecurity and undermining people's welfare. This is in direct opposition to the principles on which the system was founded. With a number of welfare benefits being devolved for the first time, Scottish Greens believe now is the time to radically re-found the benefits system in Scotland. This should start with the setting up of a Social Security Commission to explore and recommend the principles on which a Scottish benefits system should be established. The Commission will also consider how the benefits system can help to tackle inequality, how needs should be assessed, and how support should be delivered. Commissioners should be drawn from groups representing benefit claimants and welfare service users, as well as from local government and the third sector.

Real security for disabled people. The introduction of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) has been ruinous for thousands of disabled

people in Scotland, taking away much-needed support and putting them at risk of poverty. In advance of a total review of disability benefits, Scottish Greens will fight for all PIP claims to be granted initially to ensure disabled people receive immediate support, rather than facing delays of up to a year whilst awaiting a stressful and undignified assessment that treats claimants as guilty until proven innocent. Where additional evidence is required to make a decision on a claim, Scottish Greens will fight for paper, online or telephone procedures to be used rather than face-to-face assessments, unless a claimant requests one. We will also push for repeat assessments for people with chronic or degenerative illnesses with a low chance of improvement to be abolished, and for a minimum re-assessment period which would be decided between government, claimants and other stakeholders. Scottish Greens will also call for a review of DLA and PIP to examine the current stoppage of support during hospital stays, the appeals procedure and the PIP points assessment system.

Social security for women and children. The UK government's agenda of welfare reform and cuts to public services has fallen disproportionately on women and children. House of Commons Library analysis shows that since 2010 between 70 and 80% of savings made by changes to benefits, taxation, pay and pensions have come from women's incomes. We will advocate for the use of newly devolved powers and resources to help mitigate this inequality, including introducing a weekly top-up to Child Benefit. We will also address concerns around the delivery of the new Universal Credit by calling for splitting the benefit between partners and giving people the option to receive Universal Credit payments more frequently than once a month.

Ending the need for food banks. It's a national scandal that in Scotland in 2016, citizens cannot afford to eat due to reduced income. We will strengthen the Scottish Welfare Fund to enable rapid decisions to be made on applications, and use newly devolved power to support people who are left without income as a result of UK benefit delays. Scottish Greens will push for full devolution of social security powers to ensure no Scottish citizen is left without income and destitute.



3. Scotland can provide good homes for all

Our vision for housing is simple: we need good homes for everyone, homes that are of a decent standard and are affordable. This vision has become more distant in the last 30 years, with rising house prices, a smaller social rented sector and more insecurity for private renters. With more Green MSPs we can propose measures to make affordable housing available for all, raise standards in private housing, and end fuel poverty.

Our key policies in this area are to:

Build more homes. Scotland can build more homes, to create new jobs and help provide good homes for all.

Make renting fair. We need many more social rented homes, fairer rents and better quality management in the private rented sector.

End fuel poverty. Nobody should be unable to heat their home; Green MSPs will continue to make ending fuel poverty a national priority.

The Scottish Greens will push for action to increase the amount of social housing, control rents, increase security of tenure and improve management in the private sector. We need at least 12,000 new social rented homes to be built each year, and thousands more than that just to meet population growth and replace older housing. This will require many new jobs and training opportunities to meet demand. We will support ways to gradually reduce house prices and to improve the quality of new zero-carbon housing. We believe that renting should be a positive option, and that our homes must be affordable to buy, affordable to rent and affordable to heat.

Scotland can build more homes:

A radical housing agenda. Green MSPs will campaign for a radical programme of reform designed to deliver thousands more good quality, affordable, sustainable homes. Our ideas are designed to make land available for housing at low cost and ensure more homes are built where they are needed.

Get more for our money. We can build more houses, to a higher quality, with the same budget by paying less for land. We will push to give Councils the power to buy land for housing at 'existing use value', where land is valued according to its current use rather than what it could be worth if another activity, such as house building, were to take place. This was possible in Scotland until 1959, and is still done in Germany. It will allow local authorities to ensure housing is delivered for less money, by councils, housing associations, co-ops and the private sector.

Use empty homes and vacant land. We will fight to end tax reliefs which keep homes and land out of use. Scotland's 11,000 hectares of vacant and derelict land should be liable for non-domestic rates. This would raise £250m a year for investment and encourage development on the land. Our property tax would include no reduction for second or empty homes and help bring Scotland's 27,000 empty homes back into use. Using a property as a second home should require planning consent – this would boost the supply of housing in rural areas. We will support new legislation to enable development in the public interest where land is in fragmented ownership.

Unlock investment. We will propose a Housing Investment Bank as an extra source of funding for social housing. Investment can be made attractive to pension funds through a government-guaranteed rate of return. This would offer security to pension funds, an ethical investment for public pensions and a large additional source of housing funding at little cost to the government. This would be similar to the idea behind export credit guarantees (where the Government covers part of the risk of exporting, in order to encourage exports) – removing some risk in order to achieve an economically desirable outcome.

Scotland can make renting fair:

Affordable rents. Rents in Scotland are increasing faster than many tenants can afford. Green MSPs helped win rent controls for the worst affected areas and we will continue to campaign for rent controls across Scotland which reflect the quality of the property and limit future rent rises. With rent controls, greater security of tenure and the ability to challenge bad landlords, we can make renting a positive option.

Hold letting agencies to account. We will promote better regulation to tackle poor service and ensure information is available about good letting agencies and landlords. This will help tenants decide where to rent and will drive up standards of service. Many European countries have landlord organisations that make a long-term commitment to providing stable, secure, affordable, well-managed housing. Such security in the private rented sector makes renting a positive choice in Europe. In Scotland there are many good landlords, but too many poor ones. We will work to professionalise the private rented sector for the benefit of tenants.

Transform housing benefit. Housing benefit is cumbersome and over-complicated and it needs to be devolved. Green plans for rent control and a fair property tax would mean lower public spending on housing benefit as well as more affordable rents. Over time we want to move away from subsidising high rents towards subsidising bricks and mortar for quality, affordable housing that benefits tenants.

Support for housing cooperatives. We will support legislative changes which make it easier to establish housing cooperatives or bring rented property into shared management.

Scotland can improve existing housing conditions:

Not-for-profit repair service. With almost half of Scottish homes failing basic quality standards, we need to make it easier for people to make necessary improvements and manage large-scale work. We will propose a not-for-profit service to manage major repairs including to tenements. This could be done by existing housing associations or a network of local services, including local authority companies, housing associations, and voluntary agencies. Such a network would develop expertise in commissioning and managing repair works and would have better purchasing power by operating on a large scale.

Financial support for building repairs. The cost of repair work is a barrier to improving our housing stock. People need to be able to carry out essential repairs and improvements at an affordable rate. We will press for the removal of VAT on building repairs, and we will propose targeted help with financing repairs – for example, energy efficiency grants for low income households, interest-free loans paid back through an incremental increase on property tax, or options to defer paying repair costs until the property is sold.

End fuel poverty. Over one third of people in Scotland are in fuel poverty; this is a national disgrace and we need a bold approach to meet the challenge of ending fuel poverty once and for all. Green MSPs will continue to make energy efficiency a national priority, calling for the expansion of area-based retrofitting schemes and pushing the boundaries of newly devolved powers to design a Scottish fuel poverty scheme funded by the largest energy companies. We will push for all homes to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate of Band C by 2025 and support the introduction of minimum energy efficiency standards at the point of sale or rent. Some current schemes are over-complicated (for customers and for suppliers) – we'll push to streamline the processes for getting access to funding and enhance the national advice service currently provided by Energy Saving Trust.

Scotland can be a safe and secure place to live:

Reduce house prices. House price rises are locking a generation of young people out of a secure place to live. When house prices increase too fast, many people can't afford to buy, others take on too much debt, and the economy suffers from the house price bubble. But even in this situation, many people feel forced into home ownership because of the lack of affordable alternatives. To put downward pressure on house prices, we will ensure a steady supply of land for housing at low cost and ensure that it is developed. This requires better control of bank lending, better affordable renting options and a fair property tax.

Tackle homelessness. Local authorities provide over 10,000 households with temporary accommodation and last year received almost 36,000 homeless applications. In addition to increasing housing supply and controlling rents, we need a national strategy on preventing homelessness, including measures to empower tenants through better advice and support, including legal aid. We must also provide appropriate support for those who have particular needs such as women and children escaping domestic violence.

Better quality homes. Paying less for land allows for more investment in quality homes. We will support action to drive up space standards, design houses that are easy to adapt for independent living, and build net zero carbon homes.



4. Scotland can unlock the power in our communities

The Scottish Parliament has already made some progress on land reform and community empowerment but there is much more that needs to be done. Scottish Greens will be bolder in working to ensure that many more communities are in charge of their own destiny, that Scotland's land benefits the many and not the few, and that there are no longer any secrets about who owns Scotland. A radical programme of land reform can transform the social, economic and environmental prospects for communities across urban and rural Scotland.

Our priorities will be to:

Modernise Scotland's land laws to make them fit for the 21st century. Land should be owned and used in the public interest and for the common good. We will push for new laws on housing, compulsory purchase, forestry, transparency, agricultural tenancies and tax.

Unlock community enterprise. We will argue for new opportunities for communities to have greater control over the land and development decisions that affect them.

Protect human rights. Scottish Greens will defend our human rights legislation and protect all groups in society.

With more Green MSPs we can achieve real change in the ownership and use of land in Scotland, giving communities greater powers to shape how land is developed. We will work vigorously to democratise Scotland's land laws and ensure there is transparency and accountability in how land is governed, as well as ensuring a fair and equitable tax system for property.

Scotland can be bolder on land reform:

Who owns Scotland? Green MSPs will campaign to make all landownership fully transparent and to end the ownership of land in offshore tax havens. We support an open and free-to-use national land information system incorporating data on land ownership, value, use and designations. This will help citizens, communities and the public and private sectors while supporting community action.

Tenants' right to buy. Greens support proposals to provide secure agricultural tenants with a right to buy their farms in appropriate circumstances. This could be based on length of tenure and in instances where the tenant is the occupier of only one holding. During the mid-term review of the Common Agricultural Policy, we will propose measures to ensure that public subsidy is being directed at those in most need of it and to support the expansion of new sustainable forestry.

Cheaper land for better housing. We propose the repeal of provisions in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1959 to allow local authorities to acquire land for housing at existing use value. This will encourage public sector led development of higher quality housing of all types.

Freeing up vacant land for homes. Current subsidy arrangements create an incentive to keep land out of productive use. Green MSPs will campaign to ensure that all vacant and derelict land pays non-domestic rates. This will generate funds for local authorities and encourage the use of such sites. We will also support compulsory sale orders to enable local councils to make best use of vacant and derelict land.

Land value tax. Scottish Greens will work to replace the current system on non-domestic rating with a land value tax. In the shorter term we will argue for all land to be entered on the valuation roll with appropriate reliefs granted if justified.

Extending land rights. Green MSPs will support widening inheritance rights to land by giving children equal rights to inherit land, as they already have for other types of property. We will advocate the enactment of the Scottish Law Commission's 2003 Report on the Law of the Foreshore and Seabed, which is designed to modernise the law relating to public rights. And we'll campaign for greater legal protection for common land.



Scotland can unlock community action and enterprise:

Control of public land. Green MSPs will support changes to increase community control over public land. We will argue for greater democratic control of the National Forest Estate and reform of the Forestry Act 1967 to allow community bodies to become managers of national forests. We will ensure that communities have a key role to play in the local management of property currently administered by the Crown Estate Commissioners. And we will develop proposals for a new Common Good Act to give communities greater control over common good property in Scotland's towns and cities.

Promote community agriculture. We will campaign for a step change in land available for community agriculture. Green MSPs will campaign to provide smallholdings, community gardens and community-supported agriculture across Scotland through modernising the Land Settlement (Scotland) Act 1919 in time for its centenary. This will also support a shift away from high-input agribusiness to low-carbon, organic farming.

Development in the public interest. We will support proposals to extend community control over how land is developed. Green MSPs will support investment in public planning services, community-led development plans and extra safeguards to make sure people's participation is respected. We will campaign for an equal right of appeal when development proposals don't follow the agreed plan. This will remove a clear injustice in the system and promote plan-led development in the public interest.

People power. Other proposals throughout this manifesto to create a generation of community-owned energy projects, promote business models that deliver more such as cooperatives and social enterprise and fan-owned sports clubs are all designed to unlock community power.

Scotland can protect our human rights:

Defend human rights law. Fundamental rights for all must be safeguarded. Green MSPs will strongly oppose any repeal of the Human Rights Act, advocate for a Bill of Rights to safeguard our civil liberties, and support the incorporation of international treaties into Scots law. We also want all schools to achieve UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award, where children's human rights are embedded in a school's ethos and culture.

Protect trade unions. We are unequivocal in our support for trade union rights and the need to curb the power of corporate interests in Scotland. We will campaign to reverse the current UK Government attacks on trade unions.

Support reproductive rights. Green MSPs support women's legal right to choose and will work to ensure that reproductive rights are protected in Scotland. We will push for abortion to be removed from the criminal justice system and, in the short term, for improved services, access and information about abortion to be available for women in all areas of Scotland.

Widen digital rights. To unlock power in Scotland access to technology must be improved and digital media must not be vulnerable to control by vested corporate interests. We will advocate for an independent public Technology and Society Forum to protect digital rights and improve digital access across Scotland. The Forum would engage the public to help in drawing up recommendations for government and industry. The internet itself offers tools to make such a forum open, inclusive and participative.

Fight for environmental justice. Social justice and environmental justice must go hand in hand. Green MSPs will push to integrate the principles of environmental justice into legislation, industry regulation, planning and land use.

5. Scotland can guarantee a future for our young people

From early years to university, Scottish Greens believe education is a right. We have schools and colleges to be proud of, but they have seen years of cuts. Scotland's educators are working flat out with an unsustainable workload. Green MSPs will fight for an end to Scottish government-led austerity to pay for more teachers, close the attainment gap and create more opportunities for everyone who wants to gain a place at college or university.

We will champion:

4,000 full-time equivalent teachers. We will tackle teachers' unsustainable workload by pushing for an additional 4,000 full-time equivalent teachers to be hired over the course of the coming Parliament.

Help for all pupils experiencing poverty. Scotland's current attainment fund leaves thousands of pupils experiencing poverty without extra support. We will work with others to help tackle child poverty and reach every pupil with additional needs.

Fair funding for college and university students. We will call for a guaranteed level of financial support for further education students and a fund for any student at risk of dropping out through hardship over the summer months.

The Scottish Greens believe that people should have equal access to quality and inspiring education throughout their lifetimes. We want our schools, colleges and universities to be places that foster curiosity, creativity and growth, and where educators are supported to put learning before grades. With an innovative curriculum, greater financial support and increased teaching capacity, we believe we can nurture the skills needed for Scotland's society and economy.

Scotland can guarantee high quality teaching:

4,000 more teachers. Across all education sectors, just 9% of teachers and lecturers feel satisfied with their workload. Teachers at breaking point cannot provide quality learning environments for young people. Hiring 4,000 extra teachers would ease pressure and give smaller class sizes, allowing for more individual support – giving all students a better opportunity to learn.

Support for learning. We will work to give the best teachers to the young people who need the most support by calling for Support for Learning to be a promoted post. This would help tackle inequality of outcomes for pupils with additional support needs, while attracting the best teachers. It would also help restore a career structure for teachers, enabling progression for the most skilled teachers who wish to remain in the classroom.

Broader curriculum. Education should prepare the next generation in practical ways for the challenges they will face throughout their lives. Literacy and numeracy must sit alongside interpersonal skills, creative skills, confidence, physical education and good mental health. We will support a curriculum that gives students experience in global citizenship, environmental awareness, and their rights and responsibilities as Scottish citizens. All schools should provide robust 'relationship, sexual health and parenthood' education, covering the principles of equality, consent, signs of abuse and the full spectrum of gender and sexuality. The curriculum should also reflect modern industries, such as computer programming, bioscience, the creative industries and technological innovation.

Scotland can close the attainment gap:

Guaranteed hours of education. Scottish Greens support a statutory guarantee of minimum education hours for every Scottish child. Local authority budgets are under immense pressure, but with a guarantee of 27.5 hours a week of education during secondary and 25 hours during Primary we will help avoid cuts that ultimately harm children's education.

Attainment fund. The Scottish Government's Attainment Scotland Fund provides extra funds to schools with the highest concentrations of pupils from deprived areas. But thousands of pupils experiencing poverty miss out – child poverty is not exclusive to areas of deprivation and 36% of pupils from the most deprived areas go to schools without additional funding. Green MSPs will work with other parties to close this gap with funding that targets pupils in need who do not qualify for the Attainment Scotland Fund.

Scotland Guarantee. Green MSPs will campaign for a Scotland Guarantee of a job, training or education for every school-leaver. Latest figures show 8% of school leavers left school without a job or more education but this rises to 15% for pupils from the poorest areas. Local authority and Scottish Government action, such as the Edinburgh Guarantee and Opportunities for All, has helped reduce that number but too many young people are still left without the opportunity to work or study. Green MSPs will campaign for better opportunities for all young people leaving school.

Oppose more testing. Greens will resist plans for a return to standardised national testing in schools. More testing contradicts the basis of Curriculum for Excellence, will increase bureaucracy for teachers, risks a return to harmful league tables and is not the answer to closing the attainment gap.

Equality and diversity. Scottish Greens will show leadership on inclusive education policies for all pupils and families from primary age regardless of race, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, including a strong stance on bullying. We want to see all schools become UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools, where children's human rights are embedded in a school's ethos and culture to help all pupils realise their potential. Scottish Greens also support the Time for Inclusive Education campaign, which promotes inclusive LGBTI+ school environments. We will also push to strengthen links between education and other children's services with child poverty strategies. We believe in funding training for teachers so that they are able to tackle diversity issues in the classroom.

Scotland can support further education and vocational training:

Funding parity for college and university students. Green MSPs will support a national entitlement to locally-delivered bursaries for all students in further education. This means that all students can access support and know how much they will receive before starting their course. This type of entitlement is already available for higher education students and provides much needed certainty. We also support the National Union of Students Scotland's Shaping Scotland's Future campaign, including calls for financial support to increase with inflation, a benefits system that does not claw back student support payments and improved services for students experiencing mental ill-health.

Investment in Further Education. In recent years a number of further education courses have been cut and opportunities for part-time study reduced. Scottish Greens will call for greater investment in further education and for the re-introduction of part-time and access courses that are vital for allowing those from the most deprived backgrounds to access education. We will also support measures to address the underrepresentation of minority ethnic young people in further education.

Funding for college student associations. Scotland's Further Education students need a stronger voice. We will call for institutions to adequately fund college student associations and unions. Currently they are underdeveloped and underfunded compared to their university counterparts, which have a track record of providing a strong voice for their students and effecting institutional change.

Increased support for apprenticeships. The current Modern Apprenticeships scheme is highly gender-segregated and often pays poverty wages. Apprenticeships must pay at least living wage, regardless of age, must actively work to break gender stereotypes and must increase opportunities for disabled people and people from minority ethnic groups.

Scotland can deliver world-class higher education:

Student support during summer months. Summer can be a difficult time for students, as temporary work can be scarce. To give students financial support over the summer months, Greens will push for student options to access a national hardship fund to help prevent students dropping out of education between academic years, or to rebalance their bursary and extend their loan payments to stretch over the summer months.

Widening access. Green MSPs will support action to break down the barriers to further and higher education. Scottish Greens' student support proposals are designed to remove financial barriers to education and we agree with the Commission on Widening Access that "inequality in higher education is unfair, damaging and unsustainable". We will use its findings and recommendations published in March to ensure action on access to education is as bold as it can be.

Resist marketisation. Scottish Greens support measures that will allow Scotland's universities to oppose the marketisation of Higher Education and to distance themselves from mechanisms such as the Research Excellence Framework, Teaching Excellence Framework and other artificially competitive funding mechanisms, enabling them to concentrate on real research and teaching.

Support for international students. Greens will continue to place pressure on the UK government to reintroduce the post-study work visa – a scheme that allows international students to stay in Scotland after their studies. We believe that someone who has chosen to study here should be given the opportunity to stay in Scotland and contribute to their chosen field.



Isla O'Reilly
MSP candidate for Highland and Islands

Latest figures show 8% of school leavers left school without a job or more education but this rises to 15% for pupils from the poorest areas. Green MSPs will campaign for a Scotland Guarantee of a job, training or education for every school-leaver.

6. Scotland can ban fracking once and for all

We need a planned and managed transition away from fossil fuels to sustainable energy under democratic control that provides energy security, job security and faces up to the realities of climate change. The Scottish Greens know that Scotland can meet its needs through a diverse range of sustainable energy sources. We believe that we need to generate 50% of all our energy use from renewables by 2030. Scotland has some of the greatest renewable energy resources in the world, with enough wind, tide and wave potential to make us a world class leader in 21st century energy generation. Our MSPs will continue to apply pressure to see a permanent ban on fracking and other forms of unconventional fossil fuel extraction.

Our top policies are:

Ban fracking once and for all. Our MSPs will continue to take action to secure a permanent ban on fracking and unconventional fossil fuel extraction.

Affordable warmth. We believe that nobody should be in fuel poverty. In addition to our not-for-profit repair service, we will promote the wider uptake of combined heat and power (CHP) systems and call for all new buildings to meet high efficiency standards.

Control energy locally. We support the establishment of socially-owned renewable energy companies.

An energy-secure Scotland can prioritise energy generation within and for our communities. We do not need to rely on traditional, dirty fuel sources; nor must we turn to unsafe, high-risk methods of fracking and unconventional gas extraction to satisfy our energy demand. The Scottish Greens believe that by harnessing the existing transferable skills of those currently employed in fossil fuel industries, we can generate a sustainable energy revolution. By taking the lead here, we protect the skills and strengths of our workforce and businesses, and can begin to build a new energy export sector.

Scotland can transition to fossil-free energy sources:

More green jobs. There is an abundance of highly talented people working in the Scottish energy sector. The Scottish Greens want to see these skills flourish in a sustainable energy sector that contributes to a low carbon future. We will support a managed transition plan that will deliver over 200,000 jobs in renewable energy and associated industries. We will call for increased funding for Modern Apprenticeships and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics to enable more young people, particularly young women, to move into renewable energy generation, supply and support.

Harness green technologies. Government support is needed to fully develop the technology for this energy transition. We will champion increased research and development for strategically critical sectors, such as liquid air energy storage and tidal stream, to enable a smooth transition to a renewable energy future. Increased investment should also be directed to domestic energy storage systems allowing those who generate renewable energy for their own home, such as through rooftop solar panels, to balance variable generation levels with household demand.

A Greener Grangemouth. The Grangemouth refinery will remain a key asset during the transition away from fossil fuels. We will call for increased investment in the research, development and demonstration of alternative bio-based feedstocks at Grangemouth to reduce dependency on petrochemicals. We will keep options open to support a public-worker ownership model.

A Scottish Renewable Energy Bond. Green MSPs will support the introduction of a bond to create capital to finance further development and expansion of renewable energy projects in Scotland. This will allow savers and investors across the country to support the rollout of clean, sustainable energy and to generate a return on their investment as the industry grows.

Resist subsidy cuts. The UK government has made significant cuts to subsidies for solar energy and reduced the feed-in-tariff rates across all renewable sources. Green MSPs will stand strong against further cuts to the UK Government's renewable energy subsidies.



Opposing Fracking and Unconventional Coal & Gas

Scotland has mined coal for centuries and more recently drilled oil to power our society and provide livelihoods.

We now know that our dependency on fossil fuels has to end, leaving reserves in the ground, if we are to limit the effects of climate change.

We're fighting a new fossil fuels front.

New technologies have emerged in recent years allowing for the extraction of hard-to-reach fossil fuel reserves through processes of fracking and underground coal gasification. These technologies carry significant risks: environmental pollution, health problems for communities close to extraction sites and no guarantee of lower fuel prices. Licences to drill for unconventional fuels have been issued for sites around the Forth and central Scotland, threatening communities in the area.

The Scottish Greens have been successful in opposing fracking and unconventional fuel, protecting Scottish communities and environments. We have:

Won a moratorium on fracking and unconventional coal gas extraction. We worked hard along with community campaign groups to persuade Holyrood to halt developments until they can be proved to be safe for people and environment.

Led the first Holyrood debate on unconventional gas. Alison Johnstone, MSP candidate for Edinburgh Central and Lothian Region called for a vote to ban unconventional fossil fuel extraction in Scotland.

Supported community campaigns in areas at risk from proposed developments.

We will continue to oppose Scotland increasing its dependency on unsustainable fossil fuels and instead argue for resources to be channelled towards creating a range of thriving and efficient renewable energy sources.

Scotland can support community energy generation:

Control energy locally. Our energy doesn't need to be delivered by big corporations for increasingly high prices. We will argue for the establishment of socially-owned companies to drive investment in energy efficiency and low-carbon energy, such as Combined Heat and Power and micro-renewable systems. Local authorities will be supported to create municipal utility companies under public control, which deliver clean energy, cheaper heating and the opportunity for profits to be ploughed back into public services.

More community renewable energy generation. By devolving energy generation we can have more resilient communities delivering energy for a fair price while mitigating the effects of climate change. We will look to extend the Scottish Government target for renewable energy capacity to 1GW provided by community renewables and 1GW from locally owned projects by 2030 – that's quadrupling our supply in 15 years.

Help for communities. Scottish Greens support measures to make available greater levels of grants, loans and financial advice for communities setting up new renewable energy schemes and to assist them to connect to the national grid.

Community buy-outs. We support the case for community buy-outs of renewable energy schemes on Scotland's largest estates, and recognise this may need further legislation beyond the current Land Reform proposals.

Scotland can make energy efficiency a priority:

New build and retrofitting standards. As the energy efficiency of buildings and homes improves the demand for energy will decrease – both from traditional fossil fuel sources and renewables. This will contribute to Scotland achieving its emissions targets. Green MSPs will call for high efficiency standards to deliver net zero carbon new buildings by 2030, and will push for the rate of retrofitting to be accelerated to ensure that all existing properties also achieve Band C by 2025.

Support for combined heat and power (CHP) systems. To meet our target of 50% of all our energy use from renewables by 2030, we must move to generating more renewable heat. We believe that increased opportunities for CHP systems, including district heating, should be prioritised, particularly in new housing developments and new public buildings.

Taking a whole-house approach. The smart meter rollout provides an opportunity to deliver a whole-house approach to energy efficiency and usage, bringing together insulation schemes with fuel poverty programmes and area-based energy advice schemes to help keep homes warm into the future. The Scottish Greens will call for such co-ordinating action to be taken where possible.

7. Scotland can be a healthy society

The NHS and our network of social care services in every local authority is an incredible national asset. But Scotland's people face unacceptable differences in longevity and years lived in good physical or mental health. These inequalities in health are harmful to individuals and to society. Green MSPs will take every opportunity to strengthen the foundations for good health especially tackling income inequality and discrimination and prejudice. We believe Scotland can be a society where we fight poverty, build communities and support everyone in need throughout life.

Our priorities will be:

Wellbeing at the centre of government. Scottish Greens support measures to make our society's good health, equality and wellbeing the foundation of all Scottish Government policy.

A healthy start for children. We will promote policies that tackle child poverty, support healthy pregnancies, build children's confidence and foster healthy lifestyle habits from a young age.

Nutritional targets for supermarkets. Greens will propose a levy on large retailers and caterers who choose to promote too much poor-quality food.

Scotland can secure a health and social care system for the future:

Green MSPs will fight for a health service that is designed for the future. The NHS in Scotland must be kept in public hands and we support a review of all contracts with private providers. Austerity measures and welfare reform have had a significant impact on large numbers of people who are already in the poorest health, and will continue to do so for years to come. Funding for the NHS in Scotland needs to be increased to take account of this, and Health and Social Care integration needs to provide joined up care with strong links between social, primary and acute care.

Supporting healthcare careers. We want to make careers in health and social care more attractive, with less paperwork, more time for learning and career development, and a Living Wage Plus for social care staff. We will give senior healthcare professionals greater power over the operation and organisation of care, with a greater focus on long-term targets for preventative care.

Making primary care fair. 90% of patient contacts with the health service are with GPs and other primary care professionals in communities yet these services are not equally available to all who need them. Primary services are vital to preventing the need for more acute services. Scottish Greens will seek to ensure that all primary care services – GPs, community and practice nurses, pharmacists and others – have the resources to reduce waiting times and improve shared working, and we will fight to ensure that primary care provision is equitable.

Facing the challenges of our ageing society. We celebrate our ageing society. It brings challenges for the health and social care system but these changes can be positive. The challenges require us to provide care focused on retaining people's autonomy, create an inclusive culture where more people of all ages play a positive role in society, and deliver significant improvements in palliative care. The knowledge and expertise that older people bring to society should be better valued. Green MSPs will propose a commission to explore how Scotland can develop a more inclusive culture that allows older people to live healthy and independent lives.

Funding social care. Social care supports many thousands of people to lead a more independent life but funding is stretched to breaking point. The freeze on local tax powers and cuts to local budgets have led to increased charges. Older people, disabled people and their carers – predominantly women – are at greater risk of poverty as a result. Local government must be allowed to raise funds fairly, such as through progressive tax and not increased charges, to pay for social care which enables people to live full lives and avoids the social and human cost of poverty and inaction.

Fight privatisation. Green MSPs will oppose NHS privatisation. Over £85m of NHS revenue spending was spent on using the private sector, up 18% since 2009-10, and private sector PFI debt cost the NHS over £220m a year in 2015-16. Greens will propose a debt arbitration commission to explore cancelling or significantly renegotiating any damaging PFI contracts.

Scotland can give children a healthy start to life:

Fight child poverty. Green MSPs will fight to ensure nobody who is pregnant is poor, cold or hungry. We want to expand the Sure Start Maternity Grant to increase payment levels, include second children and extend eligibility where possible to provide financial stability for pregnant mothers at risk of poverty. We will fund health visitors and midwives to work with families to claim all the financial support they are entitled to. A similar project in Glasgow, Healthier, Wealthier Children, helped parents gain £3 million in financial benefits.

Healthy pregnancy. We support expanding the network of community-based health projects and improvements to the Healthy Start scheme to help parents have the healthiest pregnancy possible. We will champion an end to Employment Tribunal fees to help tackle workplace discrimination related to parental leave and help everyone exercise their maternity and parental rights at work.

Tackling children's health challenges. Green MSPs will focus on creating a child-friendly society. We will support programmes aimed at providing young people with confidence and self-worth and campaigns to reduce stigma and social pressures on children. We will support action on identifying child mental health issues early and addressing child trauma, bereavement and loss. Tackling child poverty and the impact of Westminster benefit cuts on the people they have put at risk will be top priority for local authorities and Community Planning. This includes disabled people, refugees, women and their children.

Promote healthy habits. Healthy eating and active lives start from an early age. Greens will support local authorities to provide free fruit, practical food education and work towards free school meals for all primary pupils. We will help local authorities to create safe and exciting outdoors spaces – more green spaces, more walking and cycling routes, accessible sports centres and more access to wild land.

Tackle irresponsible food promotion. Greens propose a levy on retailers and caterers to discourage the promotion of unhealthy foods. The levy would be on companies with multiple outlets whose sales failed to meet nutritional targets and would encourage the supermarket chains, which are the source of most of our food, to become much healthier places to shop. Greens will also support campaigns to ban price-promotions on sugary foods and to end unhealthy food and drink advertising aimed at young people.

Scotland can build good health for all:

Good mental health. Mental health has been secondary to physical health for too long, and too long seen as something separate from inequality, poverty and poor local environment. Green MSPs will fight for equal consideration for mental and physical health across all health and social care sectors. We support the Declaration of Rights for Mental Health to ensure that all people with mental health issues are treated equally, with dignity and respect. We will fight for more resources and professional training to meet the needs of people facing financial deprivation; LGBTI+ people, disabled people, young people and other groups that often suffer poor mental health; and to counter the inter-generational effects that abuse can play in poor mental and social health.

Tackle the big killers. Scotland's health is getting better but diseases like cancer, heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and liver disease still afflict too many people. Green MSPs will continue to support action to help people live healthy lives and make changes to reduce or quit smoking and enjoy drink socially and healthily. Cancer is Scotland's biggest killer, with an estimated 220,000 people currently living with and beyond treatment. Green MSPs support calls for comprehensive care plans to address the increased number of diagnoses and patients living beyond treatment with long-term health problems. Such plans should address patients' wider care needs, including emotional, financial and practical support.

Narrowing LGBTI+ health inequalities. Scotland's LGBTI+ population face health inequalities. We will push for access to appropriate healthcare for trans people, including specialist treatment and advice as part of transitioning and we will push for access to treatment within 18 weeks, in line with NHS standards for other services. Green MSPs will call for a ban on unjustified medical interventions that seek to forcibly alter a person's sexual characteristics or to change the sexual orientation or gender identity of LGBTI+ people. This would include medically unnecessary surgery on intersex minors and so-called 'conversion therapy'. We support a review of blood donation restrictions and support exploring the extension of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme to young people of all genders.

Improving health research. Scotland has world-leading centres for health research. Green MSPs will continue to support the research necessary for evidence-led action on better health. The pharmaceutical industry provides life-saving advances in medicine but too often the power it holds can be misused – we will support campaigns for all clinical trials to be registered and their full methods and summary results reported. We will also explore ways to ensure drugs are available to the NHS at the lowest price possible.

Health in the workplace. We spend a lot of our time at work, and occupational stress and health hazards are a significant cause of poor health. Scottish Greens will press for providing advice and support on reducing occupational health risks to be a continuing priority.



Fair funding for public services

Scottish Greens believe that we must use our tax system to fund public services and tackle inequality.

Green MSPs will support taxes that:

- Tackle inequalities in wealth and income
- Pay for public services
- Ask the wealthiest to pay more
- Are locally controlled

Public services such as health, schools and social care are the bedrock of our society and are widely supported. Scotland can fund these services, tackle inequality and raise more revenue fairly. We propose replacing the discredited Council Tax with a progressive property tax, and using new devolved powers to cut income tax for lower earners while ensuring higher earners pay a fairer share.

Property tax

New income tax powers don't give the Scottish Parliament full control, but we can use them to create a more progressive system in 2017. Under Green plans for Income Tax, everyone earning less than £26,500 a year would get to keep more of their pay, while the highest earners would be expected to contribute more.

The current Basic Rate of 20% would be replaced by two bands – 18% for the first £7,500 of income above the personal allowance and 22% for income above £19,000. The net effect of these two bands would mean that everyone earning below £26,500 would be better off. Income above £43,000 would be taxed at 43%, and income above £150,000 would be taxed at 60%.

Switching to this system would raise at least an additional £331million to invest in public services, and reduce inequality by four times more, compared to the SNP's proposals for income tax. Someone earning the median salary in full time work – £27,710 – could expect to pay just £24 a year more in income tax. An MSP, earning £60,685, could expect to pay £938 a year more.

Local tax

After 8 years of the council tax freeze there is cross-party agreement that the system is broken. Bold change is needed. It's time for a fair local tax.

We propose to scrap the discredited Council Tax and replace it with a Residential Property Tax. The Council Tax system is now based on valuations a quarter of a century old and the most expensive homes pay only three times that of the least expensive, despite being worth on average 15 times more. Our property tax is fairer since the tax is more closely related to the actual value of each home and represents a significant step towards our long-standing policy of a land value tax for Scotland.

A rate of 1 per cent across Scotland with a tax-free housing allowance of £10,000 for every home would raise an additional £490million for local services. The majority of households would pay less than at present. Councils would have powers to vary this tax locally. The new system would be introduced over a five-year transition period, a tax reduction scheme would be available for low-income households and eligible households could reduce or defer payments as they choose.

More detail

Find out more about Green tax proposals <https://goo.gl/kz4YCp>

To pay for proper public services, you need a combination of income tax and property tax.

Naomi Eisenstadt,
Independent Adviser on
Poverty & Inequality to the
Scottish Government,
BBC Scotland, 4 February 2016.

Other

Non-Domestic Rates

Green MSPs will advocate replacing non-domestic rating (NDR) with a system of site value rating, commonly known as land value tax. This will remove any disincentive for businesses to improve, refurbish and develop existing property. We propose to give councils the power to set the rate for 50% of the assessed value of non-domestic property and review the system of reliefs that currently apply.

Air Passenger Duty (APD)

APD is worth £250m to the Scottish budget but despite the pressures of austerity current Scottish Government proposals are to cut this tax by half when it is devolved in April 2018. This will damage public services and increase climate emissions. Green MSPs will fight Scottish Government austerity and campaign to retain APD.

Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT)

Stamp duty, now known as LBTT, has been improved but it still penalises people who have to move. Instead we will advocate that LBTT is rolled into local property taxation.

Basket of local taxes

Greens will continue to argue for changes that empower local government to make decisions that fit local circumstances. We believe councils should have a basket of tax options available to them if they choose – for example, raising funds through an Overnight Visitor Levy or local sales taxes. The revenue from these taxes would be small compared with property, income and non-domestic rates but can provide Councils with vital options to deliver local priorities.

8. Scotland can be an environmental leader

Scotland has a rich and varied landscape that captivates visitors; enough farmland to feed our population; dynamic marine environments; a tradition of food and drink production that is recognised throughout the world; and some of the most ambitious carbon reduction targets. The Scottish Greens will press the Government to deliver policies that enable Scotland to care for and enrich its natural assets. Our MSPs will demand Holyrood takes bold and innovative measures to reduce and adapt to climate change.

Our key policies are:

A Food, Farming and Health Act. This will establish a framework for action on food security, sustainable agriculture and healthy living at a national and local level.

Community Greenspaces. We will support the development of more community greenspaces throughout the country, reducing environmental inequalities, improving people's health and giving communities greater control over the management of valued open spaces.

Climate-ready neighbourhoods. We will support the transition to 'climate-ready' neighbourhoods that reduce emissions, limit flood risks, and increase resilience to extreme conditions through an expansion to the Climate Challenge Fund.

The environment is the foundation of our society and economy. We have a responsibility to use our natural resources sustainably to meet both our own needs and the needs of future generations. The Scottish Greens propose policies to revitalise our food systems, protect environmental resources, and support society to respond to the challenges of climate change.

Scotland can reshape food systems:

A Food, Farming and Health Act. Scotland can address food insecurity while providing tasty, nutritious food in environmentally positive ways. Food currently spans a range of policy areas from health and land use to environment, making it difficult to coordinate action to reform food systems. We support Nourish Scotland's call for an Act to provide a framework to deliver a range of food policies addressing health, environment and social justice concerns. It would:

- provide the basis for a new social contract between citizens, farmers, food producers and the wider industry;
- set a range of targets such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food production;
- address rising food insecurity amongst Scotland's poorest;
- establish a statutory commission to monitor progress and report annually to Parliament;
- incorporate the Right to Food in Scots law, as set out in the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Support for farms that provide public benefit. Common Agricultural Policy reform has recently changed the support available to agriculture but payment systems have failed. Green MSPs will champion a system that supports farmers and is clearly tied to the delivery of public benefits such as rural jobs, water management, biodiversity and carbon sequestration. We will also support the development and implementation of a Scottish Organic Action Plan led by the Scottish Organic Forum with targets for increasing organic production.

Promote community food hubs. Localising our food system supports local economies. We will support the promotion of community food hubs across Scotland, bringing farmers and consumers together to shorten food chains. These hubs can promote cooking and growing know-how, building links between communities, local farmers and food co-operatives.

Support for new farmers. It is increasingly tough for those from non-farming backgrounds to access the land and opportunities to build farming experience. Green MSPs will push to expand the mentoring schemes currently in place to provide training and in-work placements for young farmers and new entrants. We will urge the Scottish Government to shift its New Entrants to Farming programme to support environmentally and economically sustainable farming while our land reform proposals will improve access to suitable land.

Scotland can develop sustainable agriculture fit for a changing climate:

Sustainable farming methods. We will continue to support research on farming methods that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance biodiversity and increase carbon storage. This includes providing alternatives to the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilisers. We will argue for Scotland's ban on genetically-modified crops to remain in force, and will continue to campaign for a ban on neonicotinoids to protect wild pollinators and bee populations, and enhance biodiversity.

Healthy soils. Soil erosion is a growing threat to our agriculture and overall environmental quality that can be reduced through better land management practices. We will support measures to reduce soil erosion, from planting cover crops and strengthening hedgerows to contour ploughing.

Scotland can improve animal welfare:

Increase protection for wildlife. Scottish Greens will support legislation that prosecutes those who harm or kill wildlife, and advocate that protection is extended to all wildlife, not only rare species. We support the strengthening of current laws on hunting, so that no animal is hunted using hounds and that snaring is prohibited.

Review of welfare legislation. Scottish Greens will call for a review of animal welfare legislation to ensure high standards are being met. We support the phasing out of the intensive indoor barn rearing of poultry and pigs, using local or mobile abattoirs to reduce the stress of live animal transport and support calls for the introduction of CCTV in abattoirs for better monitoring. We will also call for the development of a suite of secondary legislation addressing the trade in exotic pets and the welfare of circus animals and racing greyhounds.

End routine antibiotic use. We call for a ban to the routine adding of antibiotics to animal feed, and support clear labelling of, and eventually a ban on, products from animals reared on genetically modified animal feed. We recognise these measures will need to be implemented over a period of time.

Scotland can protect our land and seas:

Community Greenspaces. Access to greenspace boosts people's health and wellbeing, while giving opportunities to learn about our environment first hand. We will support Forestry Commission Scotland and other organisations to develop more community greenspaces throughout the country, covering woodlands, wetlands and open spaces, so that all can benefit from access to local greenspace. This will also give communities greater say in the management of these valued spaces. Such projects can also help foster social inclusion, local economic development and conservation activities.

Protecting the greenbelt. Our greenbelts are coming under increasing pressure due to competing needs for new housing developments. Green MSPs will fight to protect greenbelts from further encroachment, which threatens both levels of local biodiversity and communities' identity. Through our land reform proposals we would bring Scotland's 11,000 ha of vacant land back into use for new housing developments and safeguard our open spaces.

New national parks. Scotland has many areas of outstanding natural beauty that merit national park status, but currently recognises only two such areas. As a designation for high quality environments recognised across the world, creating new national parks would bring a range of environmental, social and economic benefits to Scotland by increasing tourism in remote areas. The Scottish Campaign for National Parks has identified seven possible sites including the Isle of Harris, Galloway and the coastal areas of Mull, Coll and Tiree. Green MSPs will champion the creation of new national parks in these areas.

Environmental restoration. Large-scale ecological restoration projects of native flora and fauna will be supported, such as the continued restoration of internationally-important peatlands, coastal machair habitats and the eradication of rhododendron from strategically important sites.

Science-based marine planning. Decisions on legislation for Scotland's new Marine Protected Areas and marine planning system must be based on scientific evidence. We will work to ensure that the decision-making process takes evidence from marine monitoring into account. We also recognise that coastal areas have a dynamic ecology as well as a unique social, economic and architectural character. We will support the introduction of blue belt planning legislation that lends similar protection as green belts to these environments.

Oppose ship-to-ship oil transfers. We will continue to oppose plans to allow ship-to-ship transfers of crude oil across the mouth of the Cromarty Firth, which could put thousands of dolphins, whales and other marine and bird life at risk. Scottish Greens successfully campaigned against similar proposals in the Firth of Forth in 2007, and we will build on that success to protect other marine environments across Scotland.

Protected fish stocks. The Common Fisheries Policy must extend powers for regional management bodies that help local stakeholders to work together to prevent unsustainable exploitation of fish stocks and actively recover the habitats that make up our marine environment. Scottish Greens will support prioritising high-value, low impact fishing methods that support coastal communities and demand a moratorium on new sea-cage salmon farms.

Publicly controlled water. We reaffirm our support for Scottish Water to remain in public hands. Our water utility company should operate with the principles of sustainability at its heart and make full use of renewable energy opportunities that its land and infrastructure provide.

Scotland can lead the transition to a resilient, low carbon society:

Climate-ready neighbourhoods. Scotland is likely to experience a wetter climate with more frequent extreme weather events due to global climate change. We will support measures to transition to climate-ready neighbourhoods that reduce emissions, limit flood risks and increase resilience to extreme conditions. This includes designing more permeable paved surfaces, increasing greenspace and shade cover, retrofitted buildings, as well as better active travel facilities. We will call for the expansion of the Climate Challenge Fund to move beyond mitigation efforts and provide funding for community adaptation projects.

Effective planning for changing conditions. All sectors of society should be supported to effectively plan actions that will reduce the impact of climate change. We want the public sector to take a lead role in planning for unpredictable weather conditions and find cost-effective solutions that support communities and individuals to respond.

Protection from flooding. With floods set to be a more common occurrence in coming years, there is an urgent need for increased investment in large-scale flood protection projects and support for individual homeowners to put in place measures to protect their property. Green MSPs will press the Scottish Government to increase investment in flood protection, and support measures to reinstate natural flood defences, including reintroducing river meanders and regenerating mudflats and saltmarshes. Support will also be given to measures that will increase the resilience of natural coastal defences, such as sand dunes and investing in harbour infrastructure.

Moving to a circular economy. Green MSPs will campaign for a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks bottles where a small deposit paid when buying cans or bottles is refunded when empty containers are returned. This will be part of a wider campaign for a 'circular economy' that moves away from the traditional 'make-use-dispose' approach to products and instead keeps resources in use for as long as possible before recycling them back into supply chains.

Investment in low carbon infrastructure. International comparisons suggest that a minimum of 70% of public infrastructure investment must be directed at low carbon infrastructure projects if we are to limit global climate change to below 2°. Holyrood currently spends only 50% of its infrastructure budget on low carbon projects. Increasing this investment will drive innovation and skills development, while delivering environmental benefit and making behaviour change possible. We will call for a greater portion of Holyrood's infrastructure budget to be spent on low carbon projects.

Support international climate agreements. The Scottish Greens will hold the Scottish and UK Governments to account to ensure they meet their pledges in accordance with the 2015 Paris Agreement. We will energise Scottish society to demand firm action from our governments to play decisive roles in follow-up negotiations.



9. Scotland can be a just nation

Scotland can be proud of progress that has been made to enhance equality, protect diversity and strengthen access to justice. However, we do not yet live in a country where everyone has equal access to security and opportunities. Tackling inequality in society, in terms of income and wealth, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion, benefits all of us. More equal societies are more successful – both economically and socially. With more Green MSPs we can fight harder to tackle discrimination, create safer communities and to promote equality and diversity.

Our key policies are:

Action for equality. Bold, proactive measures are needed to achieve real equality in Scotland. Our Green MSPs will champion the Racial Equality Framework for Scotland, full equality before the law for LGBTI+ communities, a Strategy for Inclusion co-produced with disabled people, and a Gender Equality Bill.

Equality budgeting. Public spending must reflect Scotland's policy commitments to increase equality. We will support measures to improve equality impact assessment and budget analysis, which take stock of how decision-making impacts differently on groups protected under equality law. Equality concerns must be embedded in all resource allocation and policy development.

Local police. A significant devolution of power and resources to local police forces is needed to tackle crime in Scotland more effectively. We will work towards local policing that is accountable to independent, democratically controlled police authorities and investment in community policing to focus efforts on crime prevention.

Equality measures that relate to health, care, social security, education and other policy areas are integrated throughout our manifesto. This is in line with our ambition to integrate equality in all of our work. Our overarching strategy for equality and diversity is set out on the following pages.

The Scottish Green Party stands for zero tolerance against all forms of discrimination. In order to reduce crime we must increase social justice in Scotland – inequality, poverty, homelessness and addiction are amongst the causes of offending. Green MSPs will focus on addressing these root causes of crime, tackling barriers to services, employment and participation in society, while defending access to justice for all as a fundamental human right.

Scotland can take action for equality and diversity:

Working with communities. The vast majority of Scotland's population has poor access to resources, opportunities and security compared with those who are privileged and powerful. We will prioritise the goal of equality and work with those whose chances in life are reduced because of class, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, to develop our plans for an equal Scotland.

Racial equality. Racial discrimination remains a crucial issue in Scotland – for UK-born individuals as well as for refugees and first generation migrants. People from Scotland's minority ethnic communities are significantly more likely to live in poverty, with employment and political representation rates unacceptably low compared with white ethnic groups. Our MSPs will support full implementation of the Racial Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030 in order to tackle pervasive racism across our society.

Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI+) people. There must be equality before the law regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. We will back the campaign to reform gender recognition law in line with international best practice. We will call for a government-led review of legislation and services to identify inequalities for LGBTI+ couples and people of all non-binary gender identities, and for legislation to make Civil Partnerships open to all couples on an equal basis with marriage.

Strategy for Inclusion. Disabled people still experience exclusion across social, economic and political life in Scotland to the detriment of our society as a whole. We must work to break down the barriers that prevent disabled people from realising their rights. Scottish Greens will take a lead from disabled people's organisations to promote a co-produced Strategy for Inclusion which works towards equal access to resources, fulfilling employment, public services, and participation in politics and public life.

Gender Equality Bill. Gender inequality is deeply entrenched in Scotland's economy, politics and culture. Despite some progress, the rate of change is incredibly slow. As a result, diverse groups of women, including disabled women, refugee women, unpaid carers, older women and lone parents experience discrimination, poverty and insecurity. LGBTI+ people including trans people and those of minority gender identities are also significantly affected by gender inequality. Green MSPs will support a Gender Equality Bill to drive progress against all forms of gender inequality.

Scotland can put equality at the heart of public life:

Better equality outcomes. Scotland has the power to lead by example across the public sector. The Public Sector Equality Duty and investment in the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in Scotland can help improve equality outcomes across Scotland's public bodies. Green MSPs will continue to call for the devolution of equalities law.

Diverse representation. Fair and diverse representation in public life is a matter of democracy and leads to better outcomes for everyone. We will encourage measures to increase the participation of all groups that are underrepresented in politics and public life, such as the introduction of 50% quotas for women on public boards. We back the One in Five and Women 50:50 campaigns.

LGBTI+ duty. We support comprehensive action to tackle discrimination and inequality in employment and public services. We will push for enforcement of the existing legal duty to deliver effective services directly to the LGBTI+ community.

John Finnie

MSP candidate for Highlands and Islands

It is vital that everyone in Scotland is able to access justice as a fundamental human right. Our Green MSPs will work to ensure that geography and means are not barriers to accessing justice, and will push to enhance Legal Aid.



Scotland can create safer communities:

Tackling violence. Too many women and men in Scotland experience violence. We will propose increased support for the vital work undertaken by the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit and for a sustainable, long-term funding plan to resource violence against women services, including women's aid groups and rape crisis centres. We will work to ensure provision of appropriate support services for LGBTI+ people who have been subject to domestic or sexual abuse.

Hate crime. Our Green MSPs will stand firm against hate crime and show leadership on tackling crimes motivated by prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. We will work to improve research, data collection and reporting processes. We will support the development of an action plan to tackle Islamophobia and religious hate crimes.

Rights-based approach. We will call for more rights-based training for police and staff within the justice system on equality issues including hate crime, violence against women, trauma, and learning disabilities.

Sex work. We will advocate for the decriminalisation of sex work so sex workers can enjoy legal protection from exploitation, trafficking and violence and access to better support and healthcare.

Scotland can reform Police Scotland:

Local policing. Whilst we did not advocate for a single police service for Scotland, the existing structure can effectively address strategic issues such as terrorism, human trafficking and cross-border crime. Nonetheless, a significant devolution of power and resources to local division level is required. Policing priorities should reflect local wishes and, as the present structure permits, be set and overseen by locally elected police committees.

Accountability. It is vital that robust checks and balances regulate the police force. Green MSPs will advocate for proportionate use of force; an evidenced need for any firearms deployment; a review of authorisation procedures and privacy protection mechanisms regarding surveillance powers; and a review of the police complaints procedure, with a view to introducing greater independence from the Police.

Diversity. As with all of our democratic institutions, diversity in the police force is crucial. We will encourage greater diversity in personnel across all levels of the police force.

Scotland can reduce reoffending:

Partnership working. Efforts to reduce the likelihood of reoffending will require addressing the complex needs of offenders and victims by a wide partnership of agencies and services working together. We will encourage greater use of diversion from prosecution schemes and programmes of meaningful activity for those given a custodial sentence.

Community sentencing. We will call for short prison sentences of less than twelve months to be abolished; increase the use of non-custodial sentences and educational disposals; provide robust rehabilitation programmes; and call for reform that ensures custodial sentences are only used for those who pose a threat to the public.

Scotland can ensure access to justice:

The right to justice. It is vital that everyone in Scotland is able to access justice as a fundamental human right. Our Green MSPs will work to ensure that geography and means are not barriers to accessing justice, and will push to enhance Legal Aid. We will support greater use of Alternative Dispute Resolutions mechanisms and Scotland's full compliance with the Aarhus Convention on rights and access to justice on environmental law.

Violence against women. Access to justice for survivors of gender based violence is undermined by a number of key issues. We will work to establish a right to independent legal representation for women who have experienced domestic abuse and rape and sexual assault; remove means testing for Protective Orders; abolish the not proven verdict in Scottish law for all crimes; and implement medical examination guidelines.

Children. Green MSPs will support measures to strengthen protection for children from assault, including removal of the defence of 'reasonable chastisement'.

Scotland can support drug recovery:

Decriminalisation. We believe that the criminalisation of drug use creates more harm than having managed and regulated supplies. It ties up much police time and decades of effort have failed to eradicate drug use from society. Green MSPs will support the decriminalisation of the cultivation and possession of cannabis for personal use, and decriminalisation of possession of drugs that grow wild in the UK.

Licensing, enforcement and treatment. We will support licensing for the supply of cannabis and propose that other currently illicit drugs required as part of a programme of treatment for addiction are supplied through pharmacist-run treatment centres. Enforcement of existing laws should prioritise targeting major illicit suppliers, and penalties should reflect accurate assessment of harm. Green MSPs will also advocate for increased investment in the full range of drug and alcohol treatment programmes.

10. Scotland can be a bolder democracy

With a turnout of 85%, the Independence Referendum affirmed a simple but often forgotten political truth: if people are invited to take part in an important decision about the future of their country, they will – and in huge numbers. But that spirit will wither away unless citizens are again invited to play a direct role in public decision-making. We want to create a radical and inclusive democracy that puts citizens at the heart of the democratic process, both at local and national level.

Scottish Greens will campaign for:

A written constitution. A radically democratic written constitution, produced by the Scottish people in a citizen-led process.

Strong local democracy. Scotland can revive local democracy by devolving more powers to local councils and requiring them to include local communities in decision-making.

People's Parliament. Scotland can finally fulfil the promise of Holyrood when it was set up by creating a more accessible 'People's Parliament' that has more of the powers it needs to serve the Scottish public.

In a second referendum the Scottish Greens will campaign for independence. Until then we can build a bolder democracy, open up our institutions for greater citizen participation while pushing for stronger powers for Holyrood.

Scotland can lead a democratic revolution:

A written constitution. We will create a radically democratic written constitution, produced by the Scottish people in a citizen-led process. This is compatible with Scotland's place in the UK, but after more than 15 years of devolution, Scotland's democracy still does not have a founding document beyond the Scotland Acts. With the new Scotland Act effectively guaranteeing the permanence of the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Greens believe now is the time to complete the embedding of our democracy by creating a people's constitution that will be the basis of a democratic renaissance in all areas of Scottish public life. A constitution that protects rights for marginal groups will also drive equality in Scotland.

Strengthening local democracy. Scotland can revive local democracy by devolving more powers to local councils and requiring them to include local communities in decision-making. Scottish Greens agree with COSLA, the body representing local authorities, that local government needs substantial and far-reaching reform to make it more local and more democratic. We will start this process by calling for a Local Democracy Act that will require local authorities to create local democracy and public participation plans to devolve decisions and budgets to a more local level and will give councils the powers to implement new structures for local democratic participation.

People's Parliament. Scotland can finally fulfil the promise of Holyrood when it was set up by creating a more accessible 'People's Parliament' that has more of the powers it needs to serve the Scottish public. The Scottish Parliament was supposed to embody a new way of doing politics, but it has lost its way on this over years. Scottish Greens will champion new ways for the public to become involved in the legislative process, including through radical democratic processes like citizens' juries.

Scotland can return power to local communities:

Protecting the role of local government. Just as the role and status of Holyrood is being constitutionally guaranteed by the Scotland Act, so too should local government and communities be protected from the steady accumulation of power in Holyrood. As part of the process of writing the new constitution, Scottish Greens would fight for a constitutional entrenchment of the rights and powers of local government. Never again should local government democracy be undermined by Scottish ministers.

A bottom-up local democratic revolution. Strengthening local democracy should not be about the Scottish Parliament and Government devolving power at their discretion. Instead, national bodies should always have to justify why their functions are not being exercised at a local level. We support proposals made by COSLA's Commission on Local Democracy, on which all 5 main parties were represented, that Scottish ministers should be placed under a legal duty to explain why the decisions they make are not being made locally. Similarly, local government should have a 'right to challenge' to take on functions currently exercised by national bodies.

Locally funding public priorities. Scottish local government raises only 18% of the money it spends, in contrast with an average of 50%-60% in comparable European countries. Scottish Greens will fight for local government to be able to levy their own local taxes – including entirely new ones where there is a clear public demand – and to set property tax rates to match local needs. This would result in local government raising at least 50% of its own income.

Citizen-led local governance. The Local Democracy Act would enshrine a clear duty to promote community participation in all local decisions about taxation; spending and services, including a legally-defined minimum proportion of local authority budgets to be decided through participatory budgeting, a process championed by Scottish Greens in Edinburgh to great success. Green MSPs would also call for local government to identify communities that might otherwise find it difficult to participate in such processes, and support them to do so.

Scotland can champion a more open and participative law-making process:

Citizens as legislators. Citizens should be able to play a direct role in the legislative process: on presenting a petition signed by an appropriate number of voters, citizens should be able to trigger a vote on important issues of devolved responsibility. As we proposed on the one year anniversary of the Independence Referendum, this is the Scottish Greens' preferred way of deciding to hold a second referendum on Independence. If a new referendum is to happen, it should come about by the will of the people, and not be driven by calculations of party political advantage. In such a referendum the Scottish Greens will campaign for independence.

More effective Parliamentary committees. Committees were supposed to be the 'jewel in the crown' of Holyrood when it first started. But successive governments have sought to block scrutiny of its work. Scottish Greens want to strengthen the committee system's ability to hold government to account and as a first step will call for committee chairs to be elected by Parliament, not chosen by party bosses. A further step would be to establish public scrutiny committees made up of randomly selected citizens; community representatives, local councillors and others; and regular Public Questions session, in which members of the public can pose questions to Scottish ministers.

The public's voice at the centre of Holyrood. The public should be able to play a role in setting Holyrood's agenda. As is already the case with Westminster, citizens should be able to push Holyrood into holding debates on issues of public interest by presenting petitions with an appropriate threshold, without the Public Petitions Committee having a veto.

Scotland can have open and accountable public services:

Citizens at the heart of our public service organisations. Following the Public Sector Equality Duty model, Green MSPs will call for a Democracy and Public Participation Duty to apply to all public bodies and all other organisations performing public functions. This would require organisations fulfilling public functions to show that the public are consulted adequately when they take decisions and to demonstrate how their decisions will impact on Scottish citizens' right to be involved with the design and delivery of their public services. Green MSPs will also fight for the public appointments procedure to be more open, accessible and transparent and for major public bodies like Creative Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority to reserve at least one place on their boards for 'citizen governors' representing the Scottish public.

Protecting 'the Right to Know.' Whilst Scottish Greens support diversity in public service provision, the transferring of public functions to arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs) and private companies delivering services has undermined the Scottish public's 'right to know' what is done in their name. Scottish Greens would push for a radical extension of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act to automatically apply to any organisation performing a public function and campaign to end the exemption for the Royal Family.

Opening up public data. Not enough is being done to ensure that data that the public should have access to is freely available. Green MSPs will fight for all public authorities to routinely publish the public data they produce (with exemptions for personal information) in easily useable formats through a national online open public data gateway.

Scotland can have a more powerful Holyrood:

Strengthening devolution. Scottish Green representatives to the Smith Commission argued vigorously for a new radical devolution settlement. Whilst we welcome the powers in the current Scotland Bill, they are not enough. For the vision of Scotland that runs throughout this manifesto, Holyrood would need more powers to be devolved from Westminster. Green MSPs will fight all the way through the next Holyrood term for more powers to be devolved on a case-by-case basis, as well as calling for a new devolution package once it becomes clear what the strengths and weaknesses are of the forthcoming Scotland Act.

A fairer way to elect MSPs. Greens support the use of Single Transferable Vote for future Holyrood elections. This system is already used in local council elections and is more likely to create a diverse parliament that better reflects the views of voters.



11. Scotland can connect people

Scotland's geography presents challenges for connecting communities, from transport to the latest broadband and digital technologies. Our Green MSPs will propose policies focused on linking people with the places and information they need to create a connected society. We want to make active, affordable travel a possibility for all, better integrating sustainable transport with modern life. Fast broadband and good mobile coverage are also essential for people and businesses in a new sustainable economy.

Our key policies are:

Funding for active travel. We will work to increase the proportion of the transport budget spent on active travel to 10%. This equates to around £220 million per annum.

A step-change in public transport. Regulating buses and bringing rail back into public hands can create an affordable, reliable public transport system for Scotland.

High-speed broadband access for all. Households and businesses throughout Scotland should have access to high-speed broadband and good telephone signal, so no part of the country is left behind.

Establishing better connected communities is not only a key driver for future prosperity, but also empowers the people of Scotland to choose where they want to live regardless of local amenities. Developing sustainable travel options that are accessible to everyone is essential to creating a low-carbon future and reducing the impacts of climate change. Currently two-thirds of all commuting is done by car; this is not sustainable but is the only option for too many people. This is also an equality issue – women and people from deprived areas disproportionately rely on public transport. Green MSPs will channel more investment into walking and cycling for shorter journeys, and push for a reliable and efficient public transport networks for longer ones. Using the latest technologies can ensure even the most remote and rural areas of Scotland can participate in the digital economy, whilst access to services (such as e-healthcare) and participation in public life can also be improved. The Scottish Greens will urge Government to connect all corners of Scotland.

Scotland can give walking and cycling the green light:

Funding for active travel. Walking and cycling improves health and is a low-carbon form of transport. Yet of the £2.2 billion of the Scottish Government's transport budget, less than 2% is spent on active travel. Green MSPs will propose a radical boost to this funding. 10% of the total transport budget would improve existing routes and making them safer, encouraging more people to walk and cycle. This would bring us more into line with other northern European countries, which have far higher numbers of trips made on foot or by bike and reduce air pollution which is estimated to cause over 2,500 deaths per year in Scotland.

Safe streets. Pedestrians and cyclists know where improvements to the road network are needed. A mix of public consultation and participatory budgeting could ensure road users can identify and help fix unsafe routes and junctions and we will call for measures such as 20mph speed limits in residential areas, cycle hubs at bus and train stations, better street lighting and lengthened crossing times at pedestrian crossings.

Safe cycling. Safety and the perception of safety on the road is vital to encouraging more people to cycle. We will work with local authorities to implement a rolling programme to improve bike paths and pedestrian routes whilst doing other routine road safety work. We also want to give every child in Scotland the opportunity to undertake on-road cycle training and will work with councils to do this.

Protecting the most vulnerable. We support a change in the law to 'presumed liability' to protect the most vulnerable road users. This ensures that when road accidents do happen, insurance companies pay compensation to casualties unless it can be proven that the casualty was at fault. We would also call for pedestrians and cyclists with additional vulnerabilities (children, older people or disabled people) to automatically be compensated, bringing Scotland in line with other major European nations.

Scotland can provide affordable, accessible public transport:

Better buses. Too many people are underserved by local bus routes. We would support the re-regulation of buses to stop companies 'cherry-picking' profitable routes and leaving some communities stranded. Regulations should include a minimum level of service guarantee; requirements to invest in making services fully accessible to all disabled people and parents; increasing energy efficient vehicles, such as electric or biowaste buses; and a renovation programme for bus stations to make them attractive places. Green MSPs will support campaigns to extend the free bus pass to unpaid carers on benefits provide enhanced support to community transport schemes.

Reliable rail. Green MSPs will campaign to bring the railway back into public hands at the end of the current contract. Bringing railways back into public hands could reduce fares, improve links with other transport and ensure that the service is fully accessible to all. We support creating wi-fi and 3G coverage on all intercity public transport, including in stations. Reopening of old routes, such as to Methil and Leven, dualling the Highland mainline, and a switch from road freight to rail delivery will also be targets alongside securing faster journey times to London.

Connecting islands. Ferries and air travel are a lifeline for many island communities. Green MSPs will campaign to keep ferry services in public hands, support the expansion of the Road Equivalent Tariff between Mainland to Orkney, and work to ensure contracts deliver highest level of reliability for islands' air passengers.

International travel. Aviation connects Scotland to other parts of the world for holidays and business. Travel is vital, but tax cuts benefit the richest frequent flyers more than people who save for a holiday. Cuts also bring further austerity. We will campaign to provide fast rail alternatives where possible and for airline tax to represent the industry's environmental cost.

Scotland can change road travel:

Address the maintenance backlog. With tightening budgets, many local authorities have struggled to keep abreast of much needed road maintenance. Our roads are in need of repair work worth £2 billion. We will call for some of the funding set aside for new roads to be redirected and channelled into maintaining our existing routes.

Environmental evaluation for new roads. All new road infrastructure should undergo a triple bottom line evaluation, ensuring that projects deliver tangible benefits to the economy and society and the environment is respected. Green MSPs would support any new infrastructure that meets these requirements.

Ban pavement parking. Green MSPs will work with the Scottish Government to legislate against parking on pavements. This would improve safety for pedestrians, particularly vulnerable people, such as the disabled, elderly and children, and reduce damage to pavements.

Low-carbon vehicles. Green MSPs will support the rollout of low carbon vehicles, such as electric cars, and will encourage the development and expansion of car sharing schemes across the country. We would push for the creation of a Car Share Fund to help local authorities set up such groups and establish fleets of low-carbon vehicles.

Speed Awareness Courses. Drivers caught speeding currently face a £100 fine and 3 points on their licence. We support measures to offer drivers with minor speeding offences a day-long course in speed awareness, in lieu of receiving points.

Scotland can become digital:

Digital access. Applying for jobs, joining clubs or local events, finding out about social security, accessing digital healthcare or getting information on all aspects of life – access to the internet is becoming vital. Greens will seek to ensure that digital access is available for all.

High speed broadband. Vast areas of Scotland still do not have reliable access to broadband. Households and businesses throughout Scotland should have the opportunity to connect for social, health and economic reasons. We will continue to support the Scottish Government in its endeavour to have fibre broadband reach 95% of Scotland by March 2018 and will push for faster action on the remaining 5% – the most remote and hard-to-reach places.

Improving IT skills. The digital technology industry generates £5 billion per year for our economy. However, many firms have expressed difficulty in finding people with the right skills. Not only that, but having the appropriate skills would allow more people to participate in digital life. Green MSPs would call for transferable digital skills to be taught in schools and for businesses to better engage with the education sector on the issue.



12. Scotland can unleash our creativity

We believe that arts, culture and sport are not optional luxuries – they are a profound part of the human experience. Through the arts we can represent our experiences, explore questions of national, personal and community identity and inspire people to fulfil their potential. Through sport we can ensure we have an active population – leading to healthier, more productive and less stressed individuals.

Our key policies are:

Protection for arts venues and studios. We support a change in the planning framework to protect and encourage districts that enjoy strong cultural economies.

Intermittent Work Scheme. We support the introduction of a monthly compensation payment for professional artists comparable to unemployment compensation.

Boosting community sport. Access to local venues is one of the biggest barriers to participation. Funding should be channelled into community sports to ensure they are inclusive and meet the needs of everyone.

Juliana Capes, 'Loveletters'
(Hidden Door Festival, Edinburgh, 2015)

Scotland has a rich cultural heritage and we do well in sports on the international stage. Scottish Greens want to have more people take advantage of this. We will work to remove the barriers – financial, physical, cultural and psychological – to accessing culture and sport.

Scotland can support public-sector provision of the arts:

Support for community arts. When budgets are under pressure, the arts can be an easy target. We believe that cultural and heritage activities are not luxuries but intrinsically valuable to social wellbeing. We will work with all local authorities to maintain provision of community arts and culture in their region at current levels, and expand opportunities where possible.

Funding to increase participation and diversity. We will increase funding to Creative Scotland, Scotland's National Performing Companies and National Collections, enabling them to provide more opportunities for participation, outreach, and to target diverse audiences.

Measuring performance. We will introduce a new 'Outcome for Culture' across all government departments using the existing Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, designed to capture more than economic outcomes alone.

Arts education. School drama, music and art classes are important for nurturing young people's creative talents from an early age. We will support budget increases from within the education budget for arts education in schools.

Protection in planning policy. Cultural spaces such as studios and arts venues can come under threat from planning regulations. Scottish Greens will work to protect and encourage districts that enjoy strong cultural economies. We support a change in planning policy to ensure that these spaces are prioritised. Large developments can be required to provide cultural spaces to create more opportunities for the public to enjoy the arts. We will support measures to ensure that Noise Abatement Legislation can no longer be used to further restrict existing venues by future purchasers of nearby property and we will champion the need for a Scottish film studio.

Scotland can support innovation in the arts and protect creators' output:

Intermittent Work Scheme. We will encourage diversity across the culture sector, with the introduction of an 'Intermittent Work Scheme' for working artists so that they are entitled to receive a monthly payment during breaks in work. This will help to ensure that people from

a range of backgrounds are able to access employment and stay in the Creative Industries.

More spaces for culture and performance. We will encourage the use of publicly-owned empty space for cultural activity, and support 'right of first occupancy' and community right-to-buy legislation to protect formal and informal venues for cultural activity and live performance across Scotland.

Legislative protection for artists not corporations. The Scottish Greens will support UK-wide lobbying for the evidence-based reform of intellectual property and copyright legislation to promote the remuneration of artists rather than multinational corporations. We also support reform to the law of defamation in Scotland to ensure adequate protections for citizen bloggers, artists and civil society who inform and enrich our culture and debates.

Gender equality in the media. Portrayal of women in the media has a profoundly negative impact on gender equality. In 2013, men held 95% of editorial positions and 100% of political editorial positions in the UK's daily newspapers. This is reflected in widespread stereotyping of women in the print and broadcast media, and lack of gender balance on screen. Our MSPs will push for the creation of a Scottish watchdog to monitor and challenge the lack of gender diversity, gender stereotyping and the sexualisation of women and girls in the media.

Scottish representation. We value the importance of culture and artists as the beating heart of our national identity and recognise that Scotland is a leader on the world stage. A thriving cultural sector is a key part of thriving tourism, innovation, and knowledge exchange. Our culture renews us and demonstrates that Scotland is a wonderful place to live, work and visit. Green MSPs support collaboration with Scottish and UK-wide Broadcasters to ensure they reflect, enable and present all of Scotland's people and all of Scotland's creativity.

Support cultural diversity. We believe the encouragement of cultural diversity is a prerequisite for cultural democracy. We will encourage gender balance and diversity across: cultural creators, producers, distributors, distribution channels and audiences, as well as those individuals responsible for governance and decision-making. We support cultural ventures in all the languages of Scotland, including measures to encourage the use of Gaelic, the Scots tongue and the languages of those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Scotland can be a sporting nation:

Physical education. Greens MSPs will work with local authorities to provide quality sport and physical activity throughout the curriculum. The majority of children should leave school able to run, jump, throw, catch and swim, with teachers supported to deliver a physical education open to young people of all physical abilities. Evidence indicates fewer

young women continue sport after school. Schools should offer a variety of sports to suit the needs of their pupils and girls should also have the option of gender-segregated classes and a range of sports kit.

Community sport. Scotland has 13,000 sports clubs, 900,000 members and almost 200,000 people dedicated to volunteering in sport. As well as fun and enjoyment, sports clubs bring great benefits to people and society. Green MSPs support the expansion of Scotland's sports clubs through support for volunteering, accessible facilities and funding to enable more women, LGBTI+ people, minority ethnic communities and disabled people to participate.

No place for sectarianism. There is no place for sectarianism in Scottish sport, but the Offensive Behaviour in Football Act (2012), which arbitrarily criminalises football fans, is not the way to address these concerns. Green MSPs voted against this legislation in Parliament and support the repeal of the Act. Instead we will support community action against sectarianism and other forms of anti-social behaviour in fans' own clubs through greater empowerment, such as fan ownership.

Tackling discrimination. Further action should also be taken to address discrimination and inequality affecting LGBTI+ people in sport in the light of on-going discrimination including homophobia and transphobia in sporting communities.

Places for sport. Good quality, accessible, well-staffed and well-maintained health and leisure centres should be available to all and outdoor playing fields should be protected by law. Green MSPs will continue to champion the value of accessible sports facilities and open space for everyone's wellbeing.

Investment. The Scottish Government's budget has cut sport funding from £71.8m last year to £45.8m in 2016-17. We commit to campaigning for a steady level of investment into sportscotland to facilitate long-term planning and support of high-performance sport. We will explore conditional funding for national sporting bodies to incentivise increased diversity of the athlete talent pool.



Fans First campaign

From Hearts and Rangers to Dunfermline and Livingston, too many Scottish football clubs have struggles because boardroom decisions are not always taken in the best interests of fans. The majority of Scottish clubs are owned privately, often relying on the personal funds of a wealthy benefactor, and risk closure when the funds dry up.

Fan ownership is a well-established, more sustainable ownership model for sports clubs – it is the norm in Scandinavia and Germany. It is becoming more common in Scotland with Clyde, East Stirlingshire and Dunfermline Athletic now majority-owned by their supporters and Hearts FC on the way.

Why we support fan ownership:

- Communities deserve a say in how their club is run – fan ownership is the best way of ensuring this.
- With fans providing financial support, clubs have more protection from economic turbulence.
- It ensures sports are not dominated by commercial interests or by wealthy benefactors.

Our MSP for Lothian, Alison Johnstone, has led the campaign for fan-owned football clubs since 2013. Following huge support, she lodged an amendment to the Community Empowerment Bill last June. The Scottish Government now has the power to give football fans a right to buy their clubs but has no firm plans to make it happen. Green MSPs will keep fans voices on the agenda and continue the campaign to put Fans First.

13. Scotland can be a global citizen

Scotland can play an active, powerful and compassionate role in the world, promoting sustainable solutions, human rights, peace and democracy. A world of changing climate will face enormous challenges to past and long-held certainties, and Scotland could play a pivotal role in meeting these challenges head-on.

Our key policies are:

International relations. Scottish Greens will push for a greater role for Scotland in world affairs by building our capabilities to engage with countries and communities overseas.

Peace & nuclear disarmament. We will continue to resolutely oppose nuclear arms on the Clyde and seek to raise Scotland's profile as a global peacemaker.

EU Membership. We will campaign for a 'Green In' in the forthcoming referendum, while working with allies across Europe to reform the EU from within.

Scottish Greens believe that we should establish and develop the institutions that will allow Scotland to become a strong global actor on issues such as human rights, sustainable development, democracy and conflict resolution. These institutions would also provide a framework on which to build an independent Scottish foreign policy should a future referendum return a Yes vote.

Scotland can have a louder voice on the world stage:

Westminster does not have a monopoly on international relations and diplomacy. Virtually every department of the Scottish Government has an international aspect to its work and both paradiplomacy (international relations conducted by subnational or regional governments) and citizen diplomacy (international relations conducted by civil society groups or NGOs) are becoming hugely significant on a wide range of international issues, from climate change to conflict resolution.

We need better representation overseas. We would seek to establish a Scottish diplomatic service, tasked with representing Scottish interests abroad within the areas devolved to the Scottish Government, such as health, justice and education; conducting diplomatic relations with governments and citizens overseas in areas of mutual interest; and providing consular services to Scottish citizens abroad. This service would build on Scotland's existing overseas presence in the Scottish Affairs Office in the Washington DC and the Scottish Government EU Office in Brussels.

Scotland needs stronger engagement with international institutions. Green MSPs would support membership for the Scottish Government as an observer on international bodies such as the United Nations, World Health Organisation and Nordic Council. We will also encourage cities and local authorities to join international bodies such as United Cities and Local Governments or the Council of European Municipalities and Regions to make progress on global issues where national efforts have stalled.

We can do more to tackle global poverty and climate change. We will campaign to increase the Scottish Government's International Development Fund and Climate Justice Fund, boosting our capability to fund overseas projects in support of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Green MSPs will support work to embed policy coherence for development across Scottish Government decision-making.

Scotland can speak up for the oppressed. Scottish Greens have long championed the causes of oppressed and dispossessed peoples. Green MSPs would call for the Scottish Government to unilaterally recognise the existence of Palestine as a state and support the rights of Kurdish peoples in the Middle East. Where possible, we will support a policy of boycotts, divestments and sanctions against entities, such as Israel and Russia, involved in the illegal occupation of territories.

Scotland can be a force for peace:

Scotland has a history of peacemaking. Green MSPs would aim to position Scotland as a global peace hub, building on the country's reputation as a location for negotiations such as the Edinburgh Conversations, which contributed to reducing East-West tensions during the Cold War, or the peace talks in Craigellachie aimed at resolving conflict in the Caucasus.

We need to build a peace industry. We would support establishing a Scottish peace centre tasked with researching conflict issues and developing best practice for nonviolent conflict prevention and resolution. The peace academy could promote Scotland as a host for international negotiations and summits on conflict prevention, non-proliferation and debt arbitration, and engage with international academic and peacebuilding institutions such as the UN's University for Peace.

We need to curb the arms industry. Green MSPs would support measures to curtail the global arms trade by cutting Scottish Enterprise or Scottish Development International support to enterprises involved in arms sales to human rights abusers. We would encourage pension funds to divest away from these enterprises and we would push for a Just Transition Fund to help defence sector workers retrain for careers in other areas such as renewables or transportation.

A nuclear-free Scotland. Scotland's opposition to the Trident nuclear weapons system is well established and we are proud to be at the forefront of efforts to disband this obscene Cold War relic. We would pursue every possible avenue to pressure Westminster into getting rid of the nuclear weapons stored on the Clyde. We would explore options such as: issuing guidance to Police Scotland not to enforce charges against nonviolent activists involved in protests against the Faslane base and shipments of nuclear weapons on Scottish roads; amending the Marine (Scotland) Act to include a ban on the movement of nuclear weapons through Scottish waters; and ending government support for businesses involved in the supply chain for Trident.

A nuclear-free world. The Scottish Green Party will continue to support nuclear disarmament on an international scale and Green MSPs would seek observer status for Scotland in organisations such as the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative or the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs. We will actively campaign for the establishment of nuclear weapon free zones in Europe and the Middle East.

Scotland can be a strong player in Europe:

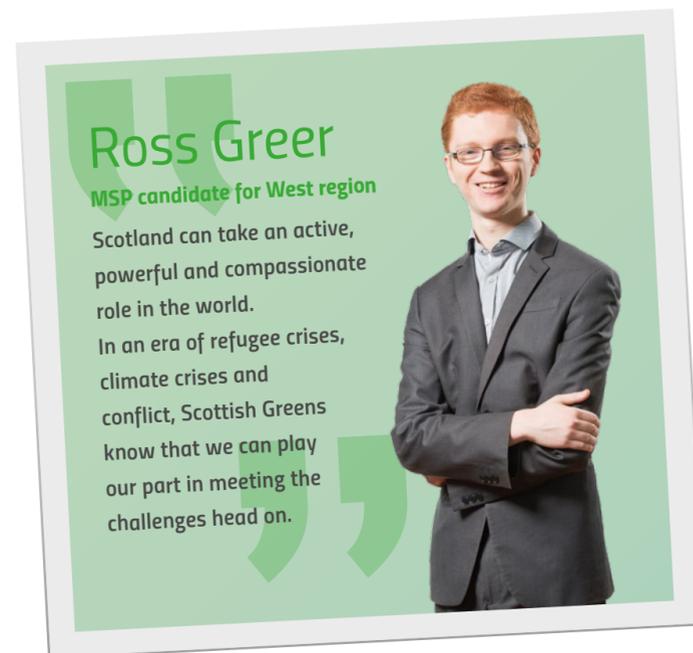
A 'Green In' for EU membership. The Scottish Green Party strongly believes continued membership of the EU is in the best interests of Scotland and we will campaign for a 'Green In' in the upcoming referendum. We do however recognise that the EU is badly in need of reforms and we will work as part of a pan-European movement to democratise the structures and institutions of the EU. We believe in a more localised and regionalised Europe, where political and economic power is decentralised and member states cooperate on mutually beneficial initiatives such as cooperation against tax evasion and transnational crime or the harmonisation of regulations on environmental protection and workers' rights.

No to TTIP. We are unequivocally opposed to the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP) and similar deals which seek to expand corporate power and erode our public services. The Scottish Green Party has long opposed this deal and will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the millions of citizens across Europe who believe that undermining our democracies is completely unacceptable. If efforts to prevent this retrograde legislation from passing through the European Parliament fail, Green MSPs would pursue measures to ensure that it never takes effect in Scotland.

Reform the EU single market. We would campaign to scrap EU procurement and state aid rules that prevent member states from favouring local enterprise or supporting emerging industries. Until such reforms take place, Green MSPs will push for the use of the Teckal exemption to ensure that local, publicly owned enterprises are favoured in procurement by the Scottish Government or local authorities.

A Renewables Capital for Europe. Scotland has the engineering know-how and technical expertise to become a major global player in renewable energy. This position would greatly aid the EU in achieving the sustainable development goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. The exchange of skills and technology would enable the growth of a decarbonised European economy and the establishment of a European super-grid would allow Scotland to export its huge surplus of renewable energy onto the continent.

Pan-European solidarity. Scotland's experience of ideologically driven cuts to public services is unfortunately not unique in Europe. We would join hands with peoples across the continent to oppose ideologically-driven economic austerity. With allies, Scotland could stand firm as a bastion of resistance and play a decisive role in turning the tide against the forces that seek to erode our rights, weaken our democracies and sell off our public services.



Abbreviations Used:

ALEO – Arm's-Length External Organisations

APD – Air Passenger Duty

HPV – Human Papillomavirus

LBBT – Land and Buildings Transaction Tax

NDR – Non-Domestic Rates CHP – Combined Heat and Power

COSLA – Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

DLA – Disability Living Allowance

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

GTCS-qualified teacher – General Teaching Council for Scotland-qualified teacher

LGBTI+ – Lesbian; Gay; Bisexual; Transgender; Intersex

PFI – Private Finance Initiative

PIP – Personal Independence Payment

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Emergency Fund



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