

STRONGER FOR SCOTLAND

SNP
MANIFESTO 2022





FOREWORD

The last two years have reminded all of us of the value of local services and encouraged a renewed sense of community and cohesion.

These elections come at a time when families are facing a Tory-made cost of living crisis unlike anything most of us have seen in our lifetimes. People are struggling to heat homes, pay for the weekly shop and are terrified to open bills.

At this election, the SNP is pledging to use all the powers and resources we have – in both national and local government – to help ease this pressure.

However, the key powers and most of the resources still lie with government at Westminster – so at this election we must also send a strong message that much more needs to be done.

Even in the face of the cost-of-living crisis, the climate emergency, and the other long-term challenges we face must also be confronted.

Indeed, addressing the climate emergency – a responsibility we owe to this and future generations – is also an opportunity to create new, highly skilled jobs and strengthen the economy.

Despite all the challenges we face – in common with countries across the globe – I am optimistic for Scotland's future.

The pandemic has caused much suffering and grief. It has also reminded us of our resilience as a country and shown what we can achieve – in difficult times – by working together.

And that's why the elections on 5 May are so important.

Councils played a key role in Scotland's response to the pandemic and will be central to tackling the cost-of-living crisis. Every SNP Councillor elected will have as their top priority helping people with the cost of living.

At all levels of government, the SNP will never stop working to support people and families.

Thanks to SNP action, average council tax bills are almost £600 lower in Scotland than in England.

The Scottish Child Payment, which the SNP introduced to give targeted support to low-income families, has just been doubled to £20 per week per child – and will rise again to £25 by the end of the year as it is rolled out to over 400,000 children.

We've just uprated eight benefits by 6 per cent to reflect rising costs.

And next winter we will introduce our new Low Income Winter Heating Assistance payment – reaching 400,000 households.

But of course, the key levers in this crisis are in the hands of the Tories at Westminster, and our support for families could not be in starker contrast to their indifference and inaction.

This crisis has been years in the making – the result of catastrophic Westminster policy decisions which have hammered away at living standards and eroded levels of public spending.

In this election, please use your vote carefully. Use your voice for strong SNP Councillors who will stand up for strong local services. Use your voice too to let Westminster know that Scotland is united in demanding real action to raise living standards and lift children out of poverty.

Over the last few years, Scotland has had more of a say in how our country is governed – with new powers being devolved which the SNP fought long and hard for.

We've used these powers to make better decisions on issues like social security – and protect people from some of the worst Tory policies. The Scottish Child Payment – support that is not replicated anywhere else in the UK – is evidence of that.

If we have been able to use limited powers to make a difference, it stands to reason that we could do even more to help people and build a better, fairer country with the full powers of independence. That's why we intend to give the people of Scotland the right to choose the country's future.

In the meantime, the SNP will do everything possible to help in these tough times. We will use every power and all the resources at our disposal to build a better Scotland.

Scotland must use its voice to demand that a deeply out of touch Tory government takes real action now on the cost-of-living crisis – 5 May is Scotland's opportunity to demand real support for families and communities the length and breadth of the country.

That is the clear choice facing the people of Scotland on 5 May.

Make sure your voice is heard.

Vote SNP on 5 May.





At this election you will have the opportunity to choose who is best placed to take the decisions about the future of your local area.







Here we set out our national policy priorities. Local manifestos will set out in more detail the vision for individual council areas, as set out by the local SNP council team.

In tough economic times local councils have a key role in driving our economy, building, and protecting our communities and providing services that put people first.

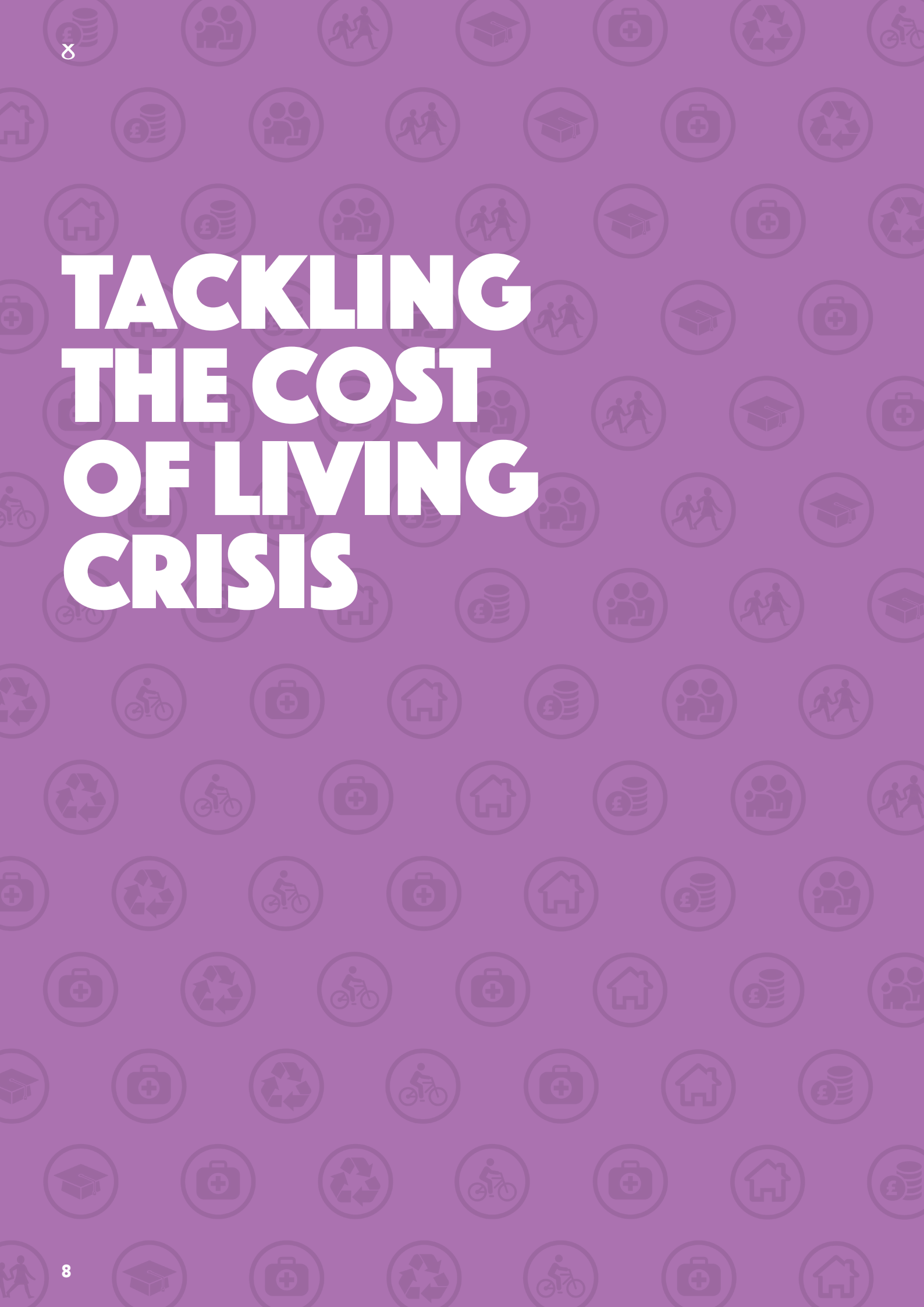
On May 5, you can elect a strong team of effective SNP local councillors and SNP councils that will work to build recovery, support families through the cost-of-living crisis and improve and protect your local services.

KEY PLEDGES

SNP COUNCILS AND COUNCILLORS WILL:

-  Prioritise action to ease the cost of living squeeze and help those on the lowest incomes
-  Take action to tackle fuel poverty and make it more affordable to heat and power homes
-  Support a fair, green, resilient and sustainable recovery from Covid
-  Build a wraparound childcare system, providing care before and after school, all year round, where those on the lowest incomes will pay nothing
-  Recruit at least 3,500 additional teachers and 500 classroom assistants over and above the 1,400 teachers recruited during the pandemic
-  Work with the Scottish Government to build a National Care Service that improves the way care and support is delivered for people who use community health and social care, while protecting local accountability. Reform will be accompanied by a 25% increase in social care investment

-  Make significant progress towards our target of 110,000 more affordable homes by 2032 - 70% of them for social rent
-  Increase access to sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities in local communities; especially for children and young people from low-income backgrounds.
-  Make more land available for community market gardens, orchards and allotments and support community food initiatives - all part of making Scotland a Good Food Nation
-  Provide more walking and cycling routes in local areas and ensure that communities in every part of Scotland benefit from the Scottish Government's increased budget for active travel.
-  Support the Scottish Government's plan to give the people of Scotland the opportunity to choose the country's future in an independence referendum in the first half of this parliamentary term.

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TACKLING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

The impact of the Tory cost-of-living crisis reaches far and wide, but it's disproportionately impacting the poorest, most vulnerable members of society.

Everyone needs a safe, warm place to call home. However, soaring energy prices are making it increasingly difficult for people to heat their homes. It is vital that people struggling with energy bills get the information and support they need.

With energy bills increasing by 54% and an ongoing cost of living crisis, the UK Government is not doing enough to provide lifeline support that could prevent households facing fuel poverty.

Here in Scotland, the SNP Government has invested to help families facing the cost of living crisis.

The Job Start Payment, Young Carer's Grant, Funeral Support, Best Start Grant, Carer's Allowance Supplement and Child Winter Heating Assistance – all Social Security Scotland delivered benefits – have now risen by 6%, which is almost double the increase to benefits controlled by the UK government.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Child Payment – not replicated anywhere else in the UK – will be doubled to £20 a week from April, and then further increased to £25 a week by the end of 2022. The payment will also be extended to under 16s in low income families by the end of this year.

SNP councils will work to augment Scottish Government support in a range of ways – dependent on local circumstances – to support those affected most by the cost of living crisis.

SNP councils will continue to work with the Scottish Government to improve the energy efficiency of homes and buildings. This will tackle fuel poverty, by making it more affordable to heat and power homes. It will also support our net zero transition.

While most powers relating to energy markets remain reserved to the UK Government, SNP councils will back the Scottish Government's calls for the UK Government to take further urgent action to support households – including a reduction in VAT on household energy bills and more support for those on low incomes.

COST OF LIVING PAYMENT

SNP councils will continue to work with the Scottish Government through a range of actions to help people facing the impacts of higher energy bills, the increased cost of food, the UK Government's National Insurance hike and interest rate rises.

The SNP Government recently announced £290 million in financial support to help address the rising cost of living. Over £280m is providing £150 to every household in receipt of Council Tax Reduction – regardless of council tax band – and to all other households in council tax bands A to D.

This means 1.85 million households, or 73% of all households, will receive financial support, either through council tax bills or direct payments.

The SNP Government has also made £10m available through the Fuel Insecurity Fund to help third sector organisations support those facing fuel poverty.

At this election, the SNP is committing to protect the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which allows support to be targeted to those most in need.

COUNCIL TAX

Scottish council tax payers already get the best deal in the UK – for example, paying on a band D property around £600 less on average than counterparts in England and around £400 less than in Wales.

SNP councils will work to keep council tax bills as low as possible, while protecting vital services.

The SNP will also scrap council tax for everyone under 22. For a young person living alone in a Band B property that will mean an annual saving of around £750.

COVID RECOVERY

COVID-19 has had a profound impact on all our lives, and has significantly impacted our public services and economy, with many systemic inequalities made worse as a result.

The priority of SNP councils for the next five years is to secure a fair, green and resilient recovery from the COVID pandemic. That means:

- A people-centred recovery of public services driven by local needs
- Rebuilding local economies with high quality jobs, fair work, and equal access to opportunities
- Supporting communities using local knowledge and assets to help tackle poverty, inequality and social isolation
- Healthier, better connected places, cleaner air and warmer homes at the heart of an environmentally sustainable recovery

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Throughout the pandemic, the SNP has continued to support businesses to the maximum extent possible.

The SNP Government has offered 100% COVID-19 rates relief for the past two years, without any cap. Indeed, Scotland was the only part of the UK in which support on this scale was provided.

Scotland currently has both the lowest business rates poundage in the UK and the most generous relief schemes.

At this election, we commit to maintaining the Small Business Bonus – ensuring that 100,000 business properties will pay no rates.

SNP councils will continue to support local economies in their recovery from the pandemic in a range of ways. We will consider the needs of local businesses, communities and households and target support to maximise economic recovery.

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Our goal is to give all children the best start in life and make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up, for every child.

EXPANSION OF EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

Thanks to the joint work of the SNP government and councils across Scotland, 130,000 children can already benefit from 1,140 hours of free early learning and childcare (ELC) each year.

All three and four-year-olds, and two-years-olds who need it most, are eligible for 1,140 hours of early learning and child care. This helps give children the best start in life. It also saves families who take up this entitlement around £4,900 per child each year.

We will now build on this. SNP councils will establish a wraparound service, providing care before and after school, all year round. Those on the lowest incomes will pay nothing – contributions for others will be fair and affordable.

SNP councils will also expand free early years education to all 1 and 2 year olds, starting with children from low income households.

CLOSING THE POVERTY-RELATED ATTAINMENT GAP

We will continue work to close the attainment gap in our schools and raise the bar for all.

SNP councils will continue to give power and resources directly to schools, allowing teachers, parents and communities to make the best decisions.

There are now more teachers in Scottish schools than at any time since 2008, and the ratio of pupils-to-teachers is at its lowest since 2009. There are over 2,000 more teachers in Scotland's schools than before the start of the pandemic in 2019.

SNP councils – working with the SNP government – will build on progress to close the poverty-related attainment gap by:

- ensuring that the £1 billion Scottish Attainment Challenge delivers measures to support Covid recovery, improve attainment and close the attainment gap
- recruiting at least 3,500 additional teachers and 500 classroom assistants across Scotland – over and above the 1,400 teachers recruited during the pandemic
- supporting pupils whose studies and wellbeing has suffered as a result of the pandemic
- continuing to devolve more powers and financial control to teachers – who know pupils best
- taking forward the recommendations of the OECD review of Curriculum for Excellence
- improving the educational and well-being outcomes of care experienced young people

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to deliver the recommendations of the Morgan review of additional support for learning, to enhance the learning experiences of those with additional support needs.

PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING

SNP councils will ensure that headteachers and teachers continue to be empowered through Pupil Equity Funding – with £130 million investment this year alone.

THE PROMISE

The Care Review was one of the most substantial, ambitious, and necessary reviews in the history of the Scottish Parliament. It delivered a powerful simple message: care must have love and nurture at its heart.

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to deliver fully on The Promise and help provide children and families with the strong foundations they need to thrive, and ensure that children who are or become care experienced are loved and supported to fulfil their potential.

TACKLING CHILD POVERTY

The SNP is taking immediate steps to put cash in the pockets of families – tackling the cost of living crisis and helping lift thousands of children out of poverty in Scotland.

The actions taken by the SNP to date and the commitments in the second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan could see child poverty fall to its lowest level in nearly 30 years.

More than 60,000 fewer children could be living in relative poverty in 2023 compared to 2017, according to updated modelling.

However, all of this risks being undermined by the cost of living crisis and the inaction of the UK government.

It is therefore vital that councils and the SNP government work together and do everything within our powers and resources to tackle child poverty.

We are determined to meet the ambitious targets set for 2023-24 and 2030 and beyond.

SNP councils will work closely with the Scottish Government to improve long-term employment opportunities for parents, strengthen social security support, and reduce household costs.

In 2022-23 this work will be supported by investment of almost £113 million, in addition to funding already allocated to ongoing programmes.

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to:

- significantly increase employment services with the aim of supporting up to 12,000 parents to enter and progress in sustainable and fair work. This will be backed by initial investment in employability support for parents of up to £81 million in 2022-23
- increase the Scottish Child Payment from £20 to £25 and extend it to under 16s in low income families by the end of 2022. This will deliver £1,300 per eligible child per year – backed by investment of £671 million over the next two years

- deliver a new Parental Transition Fund to tackle the financial barriers parents face in entering the labour market, particularly over the initial period of employment, with an investment of up to £15 million each year
- mitigate the UK Government's Benefit Cap as fully as possible within devolved powers, through Discretionary Housing Payments.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

All children in primaries 1 to 5 now benefit from access to free school meals, saving families around £400 per child per year. SNP councils will now go further and extend free school meals to pupils in primaries 6 and 7.

We will also roll out free school breakfasts, all year round, to pupils in primary school and state-funded special schools.

SNP councils will also pilot the provision of free nutritious school breakfasts in secondary schools, and, based on the findings of the pilot project, explore the feasibility of universal breakfast provision in secondary schools.

SCHOOL CLOTHING GRANT

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to deliver the school clothing grant – £120 for pupils in primary school and £150 for those in secondary school – and ensure it increases each year with inflation.

DIGITAL ACCESS

Covid-19 changed the way education is delivered. During the pandemic, we focussed on connecting children most in need, but SNP councils will now work with the Scottish Government to provide every child in Scotland with an electronic device, free internet connection and the support to use it.

MUSIC AND ARTS EDUCATION

The Scottish Government has provided funding to remove charges for music tuition. To support this, SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to implement all recommendations of the Music Education Partnership Group, mainstreaming music as a core subject in Scotland's education system and ensuring that school-based instrumental music teachers receive GTCS registration and accreditation – creating a professionally recognised national music teaching force.

CURRICULUM CHARGES

To ensure equal access to the whole curriculum, core curriculum charges have been removed for all pupils. This will enable children to take the subjects they want without families having to struggle to meet costs of resources and materials for practical lessons, such as home economics, hospitality, art and design, music and design and technology.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

We recognise the importance of having equality and human rights embedded in our education.

SNP councils are wholly committed to delivering the recommendations on LGBT Inclusive Education across the curriculum, to improve the learning environment for all children and young people.

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to deliver high quality anti-racist education in our schools. To track progress, we will improve the reporting and publication of data on racist incidents in schools.

SNP councils will support the continued development of Gaelic Medium Education, in partnership with families, improving access to the language and increasing the numbers using the language.

PLAY PARKS

We know that play is a crucial part of children's health and well-being and as we continue to recover from the pandemic, playing outside will allow children to reconnect with each other and allow them to fully enjoy childhood.

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to renew every play park in Scotland, so that all children have access to high quality outdoor play in their own community. This will be backed by investment of £60 million.

SNP councils will continue to support an integrated multi-agency approach to help families from pre-birth, pregnancy, birth and beyond.

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LIVING HEALTHIER

The impact of Covid on our health, wellbeing and quality of life has been significant and profound. We want to see as much health care as possible provided in local communities and closer to people's own homes.

NATIONAL CARE SERVICE

The importance of our social care services has never been clearer. We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to our nation's carers, paid and unpaid, for the commitment and compassion shown throughout the pandemic.

SNP councils and Councillors will work closely with the Scottish Government to support the design and establishment of a National Care Service, to improve care and support for people who use community health and social care, while protecting local service delivery.

The National Care Service will be co-designed with the people who use and rely on these services. It will improve standards, ensure enhanced pay and conditions for workers and provide better support for unpaid carers.

REMOVAL OF NON-RESIDENTIAL CARE CHARGES

We believe social care services, just like health care services, should be provided on a truly universal basis, free at the point of use. SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to abolish charges for non-residential care.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is one of the most important public health issues facing Scotland today and that is why, even before Covid, the SNP has made it a priority.

To tackle stigma and raise awareness of mental illness, we will offer mental health first aid training to everyone in the public sector by 2026.

SNP councils will strengthen mental health strategies and work across departments and portfolio areas, encouraging joined-up service delivery and cross-departmental collaboration.

We will seek to improve access to good quality green spaces in our local areas and ensure the upkeep of vital spaces, to keep them clean, safe and easily accessible.

SNP councils will increase access to sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities in local communities, especially for children and young people from low-income backgrounds.



OUR COMMUNITIES

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Everyone should have a safe, warm, affordable home in the community they want to live in. SNP councils are committed to expanding our social and affordable housing stock.

Since 2007, the SNP Government has delivered 105,755 affordable homes, over 73,000 of which were for social rent.

SNP councils will work with the Scottish government to make progress towards our target of 110,000 more affordable homes by 2032. 70% of these will be for social rent and 10% will be in rural, remote and island areas. This will be backed by investment of over £3.5 billion over this parliamentary term. It will also support 14,000 jobs a year.

This target will be met through a combination of new build homes and bringing existing housing stock back into use.

ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Scotland has strong housing rights for those experiencing homelessness, and SNP councils will continue to work with the Scottish Government and third sector partners to reduce homelessness, end rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation. Ensuring that everyone has a warm, safe, secure home that meets their needs is central to this. We will work with the Scottish Government in rolling out the 2022-26 £50 million Ending Homelessness Together Fund.

No one should need to sleep rough. Work by the Scottish Government and councils has replaced winter night shelters with new rapid-rehousing welcome centres to provide short term emergency accommodation those in immediate need. Welcome centres will help people into settled accommodation including through Housing First where people with complex needs are provided with wrap-around support to maintain tenancies.

Where homelessness does occur, it should be brief and support provided to make it unlikely to happen again. The key to reducing homelessness is prevention

so SNP councils will focus on early intervention and deliver a person centred approach to meet needs. When someone is at risk of homelessness, our priority is to get them into settled accommodation as soon as possible. SNP councils will invest in a rapid rehousing approach and work with the Scottish Government to introduce a national programme to increase housing choices for those facing homelessness.

20 MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to deliver 20-minute neighbourhoods – liveable, accessible places, with thriving local economies, where people can meet daily needs within a 20 minute walk, enabling us to live better, healthier lives and supporting the transition to net zero.

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to increase the amount of housing within town centres and high streets, both through use of existing stock and new developments.

HIGH STREET REGENERATION

Our high streets have been hard hit by the pandemic and the ever increasing use of online shopping. SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to explore a new national digital sales tax to level the playing-field between physical and online retail – revenue from this would be used to support town and city centres.

SNP councils will work to support thriving town centres and high streets through the Town Centre First principle, and ensure that the impact on town centres is considered as a part of all investment decisions.

We will work with the Scottish Government through the recently published Retail Strategy to help local retail sectors change, innovate and thrive, and become exemplars in inclusive growth, supporting robust, local supply chains and offering people and communities the goods, experiences and services they want.

LIBRARIES

We recognise the importance of public libraries in local communities and believe that everyone should have access to library services. As well as, and as part of, instilling a love of books and reading, local libraries support mental health and wellbeing, tackle social isolation, help close the digital divide and reduce the school attainment gap.

The £1.25 million Public Library Covid Relief Fund is helping public libraries remain open and supports 23 projects across Scotland.

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to protect and improve access to public and school libraries across Scotland.

VALUING THE THIRD SECTOR AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

During the pandemic, the third sector provided lifeline support to people, communities and society.

We know that the third sector needs reliable funding to continue its invaluable work. SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to deliver multi-year funding for the sector to help ensure a more secure and sustainable future.

The Scottish Government's Community and Third Sector Recovery Programme is backed by £25 million and awards will be completed by this summer. A further £13.5 million will support the third sector to recover and transition from the pandemic.

Social Enterprises are vital in building a wellbeing economy. SNP councils will back a new three year Social Enterprise Action Plan, backed by £5 million of Scottish Government funding.

WARM SCOTS WELCOME SCHEME

We want Scotland to be a welcoming and safe haven for all those seeking refuge and asylum.

As part of this, ensuring the wellbeing and safety of those arriving from Ukraine, who are overwhelmingly women and children, is critical.

Scotland's offer to sponsor and provide refuge and sanctuary to displaced Ukrainians, as part of the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, is now open.

Accessible through the UK Government's online portal, a distinct route to accommodation, support and care in Scotland – the Warm Scots Welcome – is now available to people displaced by the invasion of Ukraine.

RIGHT TO FOOD

The right to food is fundamental. We fully support the Scottish Government's commitment to enshrine that right in law as the cornerstone of Scotland being a Good Food Nation. This will form part of the commitment to incorporate UN Human Rights charters into Scots Law.

SNP councils will take early action to consult on, draft and produce local good food nation plans. We will also work with the Scottish Government to roll out and implement the local food strategy to promote and support the availability of sustainable Scottish produce, supporting local jobs, businesses and food production and cutting food miles.

We will make more land available for community market gardens, orchards and allotments and support community food initiatives, including local food markets and renovated retail units especially in marginalised and deprived communities, to bring fresh, affordable food closer to where people live and work.

Scotland has one of the world's best natural larders but we do not always eat well and obesity remains a significant problem.

Change starts with our children and so, alongside our commitment to provide healthy and nutritious free school meals in primary schools, SNP councils will:

- provide more advice on weaning for families and support more families to cook from scratch through ParentClub
- ensure Breakfast, Out of School and Holiday Clubs provide local healthy produce such as Scottish berries in season
- work with the Scottish Government funded Food for Life programme so that the food in school meals is nutritious, healthy and locally sourced and produced; and
- work with the Scottish Government to develop a fully funded free school milk scheme which provides for children's dietary needs.

SCOTLAND LOVES LOCAL

It is now more vitally important than ever to support the businesses which are at the heart of communities and consider shopping, eating and drinking locally as we all have a role to play in Scotland's economic recovery.

SNP councils will build on the successful 'Scotland Loves Local' Campaign and encourage people to visit local shops and cafés, and buy goods and services from local businesses whenever possible. This will help support jobs and town centres.

CULTURE

Culture is central to who we are as a nation. We have always valued culture and creativity, but the pandemic has demonstrated more than ever how vital it is to our wellbeing, mental health and sense of belonging.

We believe that everyone should be able to take part in culture and heritage in their local authority area, so SNP councils will protect our cultural infrastructure by providing free access to our National Galleries and Museums and continue to fund non-national museums and galleries through support for Museums & Galleries Scotland.

SNP councils will increase access to sporting, leisure and cultural opportunities in local communities, especially for children and young people from low-income backgrounds.

ANTI-RACISM

SNP councils will support inclusion and tackle racism in cultural provision. We will implement the recommendations of the Scottish Government funded Empire, Slavery and Scotland's Museums project in our museums and galleries.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

SNP councils will adopt the APPG definition of Islamophobia which states that "Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness."

ANTISEMITISM

SNP councils will adopt the IHRA's working definition of antisemitism which states that "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

BAIRNS HOOSE

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to ensure every child who needs it has access to a Bairns' Hoose, ensuring a child-centred approach to delivering justice, care and recovery for children who have experienced trauma.

NET ZERO AMBITIONS

As part of our plans to become a net zero nation by 2045, we will deliver a revolution in transport across all parts of Scotland. We are committed to action to secure a net zero and climate resilient future in a way that is fair and just for everyone.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

Since the start of the pandemic, we have seen a huge increase in cycling and walking. During lockdown people were encouraged to take physical activity and found their local roads were less busy and felt safer. It proved that people will choose to cycle when they feel safe.

SNP councils will provide more walking and cycling routes in local authority areas and ensure that communities in every part of Scotland benefit from the Scottish Government's increased budget for active travel.

SNP councils will also provide funding to maintain pavements, pathways and routes that cyclists and pedestrians use. We will ensure that every town has access to a high quality and separated walking and cycling network, allowing safe daily commutes and reducing dependence on private motor vehicles.

SNP councils will develop and publish plans on how our local areas can reduce kilometres travelled by car by 20% by 2030 - this will include highlighting where car journeys are still needed but also setting out how we will encourage people to use the bus, local rail services, and walk and cycle more.

FREE BIKES FOR CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE

To encourage our youngest citizens to participate in Active Travel, we will provide free bikes for all children of school age who cannot afford them.

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government through the existing pilot projects which will inform the design of a national rollout.

The benefits of increasing access to bikes for children are obvious. It ensures equality of opportunity in building life skills, confidence, independence and embeds healthy and sustainable travel choices.

To make owning a bike an option for everyone, we will work with the Scottish Government to ensure that loans and grants are available for the purchase of pedal cycles and for their repair.

DECARBONISING HOMES AND IMPROVING STANDARDS

Decarbonising homes will be crucial in the fight against climate change. The Scottish Government has published a Heat in Buildings Strategy and SNP councils will significantly scale up the pace of our work to meet the targets.

SNP councils will work closely with the Scottish Government to decarbonise the heating of 1 million homes by 2030.

We believe the public sector should lead from the front in efforts to decarbonise Scotland, and so SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government to decarbonise the public sector estate. This will be backed by investment of £95 million.

We will review energy standards set through building regulations to deliver further improvements in energy efficiency and help remove poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.

FREE BUS TRAVEL FOR UNDER 22s

Under 22s living in Scotland can now benefit from free bus travel.

Extending free bus travel will make public transport more affordable and help give many young people wider access to education, leisure, and work opportunities. It will also support the choice to travel sustainably early in their lives.

SNP councils will promote uptake of relevant concessionary travel schemes and ensure that every child or young person who becomes eligible for free bus travel is able to access their entitlement quickly and easily.

BUS SERVICES

The SNP is committed to supporting bus services and will continue to work with and support local government and bus operators to tackle decreasing passenger numbers.

We will maintain current bus services and seek to expand these where possible; as part of this, we will engage with local bus operators to ensure they and communities are benefiting from funding to switch from diesel to eco-friendly vehicles.

EU CLIMATE NEUTRAL AND NET ZERO CITIES INITIATIVE

We support Glasgow and Edinburgh's bids to be part of the European Union Climate Neutral and Net Zero Cities initiative. If successful we will ensure all Scotland's cities are able to share the benefits and learning from the initiative as they transition to net zero.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Throughout the pandemic, we have seen how essential good cooperation and collaboration between national and local government is.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

To ensure Scotland's diverse communities and different places have greater control and influence over decisions that affect them most, the Scottish Government launched the Local Governance Review.

The Review looks at how local decisions are made and how democracy works across national and local levels of government, and within communities.

When completed, and after considering all recommendations, SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government on a Local Democracy Bill, which will further empower councils and local communities and ensure that decisions are taken as close as possible to those they affect most.

KEEPING POWER LOCAL

SNP councils will work with the Scottish Government and key stakeholders on a Community Wealth Building Act to help redirect wealth, control and procurement benefits to local economies.

The Act will require local authorities and public bodies to spend more in local communities through increased local procurement, buying more from small businesses and ensuring taxpayers money is reinvested as far as possible in local communities.



SCOTLAND'S FUTURE SCOTLAND'S CHOICE

A vote for the SNP at this election is a vote in favour of these basic democratic principles:

The people of Scotland have the right to decide our own future and the people best able to decide how Scotland is governed are the people who live here.

Based on those principles we believe the people of Scotland should have the opportunity in a referendum to decide whether Scotland should be an independent country.

Independence provides the opportunity to pursue priorities tailored to Scotland's needs and make choices best suited to Scotland's interests.

Independence will give Scotland the powers we need to grow our economy, invest in our people and public services, and build a fairer, wealthier, greener country.

SNP councils and Councillors will support the Scottish Government's clear mandate to hold a referendum on independence in the first half of this parliamentary term.

STRONGER FOR SCOTLAND

SNP
MANIFESTO 2022