

# SNP Manifesto 2021

## What we're doing for families

Our ambition is for Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up. To do that we're supporting families to give their children the very best start in life.

Re-elect the SNP to:

### **Provide Baby Boxes to all new children**

Our Baby Box has already provided tens of thousands of new parents with essential items for a baby's first weeks and months.

The box provides practical help – a package of essentials and a safe space for babies to sleep. But it also puts into practice the principle that every child should get a fair start in life.

We will continue to provide Baby Boxes for all of Scotland's new children, ensuring every baby born in Scotland has an equal start in life, and we will explore ways in which the baby box can be used to further promote women's health and support parental mental health.

### **Deliver affordable, high-quality childcare**

We will complete the expansion of free, high quality childcare to 1,140 hours – the same time a child spends in primary school – by August 2021.

In the next Parliament we will go further, by building a system of 'wraparound' childcare, providing care before and after school, all year round. Those on the lowest incomes will pay nothing, and others will make fair and affordable contributions.

We will also expand free early years education to all 1 and 2 year olds, starting with children from low income households in this parliament.

### **Tackle classroom hunger**

We will provide free school breakfasts and lunches to every primary school pupil in Scotland, all year round, and for all children in state-funded special schools in Scotland.

Looking longer term, we will 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.

### **Protect family incomes**

Scotland has the most progressive income tax system in the UK, with more than half paying less than they would if they lived in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

By asking those who earn the most to pay a little bit more, we have also been able to invest more in public services and deliver a range of benefits, like free-prescriptions, free university tuition and concessionary bus-travel that are not all available elsewhere in the UK.

Having only introduced this new system in 2018, and with a need now to focus on recovery, we will aim for

# SNP Manifesto 2021

## What we're doing for families

stability over the next Parliament. While it is important for any government to have flexibility to respond to a change in circumstances, our aim is to maintain current Income Tax rates for the duration of the parliament and increase thresholds by a maximum of inflation.

We will nearly double the planned investment in the Parental Employability Support Fund to £15 million in the next two years to help improve employment chances and support parents into good, secure jobs. We will also explore how we can link Parental Employment Support with our national Fair Start employment programmes.

### **Tackle child poverty**

Our new Scottish Child Payment provides low income families with an additional £40 every four weeks, initially for each child under 6. We will roll out this benefit for all children under 16 in low income families by the end of 2022.

We want to go further. We will double the Scottish Child Payment to £20 per child by the end of parliament to lift thousands of families and children out of poverty.

To bridge the gap until the Scottish Child Payment is fully rolled out, we will provide a cash grant of £520, paid across four quarterly instalments, for every family with children in receipt of free school meals until the full rollout of Scottish Child Payment is complete.

### **Provide safe places to play**

We will deliver a programme of activities for children and young people over the summer – backed by £20 million – to help them socialise, play and reconnect.

We will renew every play park in Scotland, so that all children have access to quality play in their own community.

### **Ensure our NHS works for everyone**

We will increase frontline NHS spending by at least 20% to support and renew our NHS as it recovers from Covid-19. This will increase funding of frontline services by over £2.5 billion.

We will ensure community health services receive at least half of our NHS's frontline spending.

We will protect free eye examinations and free prescriptions in Scotland, saving people almost £22 and £9.35 per item respectively, compared to England.

We know that having the support of loved ones during hospital treatment can improve health outcomes for children and young people. Building on the success of our Neonatal Expenses Fund, we will introduce a Young Patients Family Fund to support families visiting children who are receiving inpatient care.

### **Support our young people**

We will support our young people as they make the transition into adulthood.

We will provide free bus travel to anyone under the age of 22, helping young people get to work, college or university or to see family and friends.

We will ensure no one under the age of 22 pays council tax, saving young people starting out in life around £750 a year on an average Band B property.

We want all school leavers, regardless of background, to have the opportunity to achieve their full potential in the next chapter of their lives. Learning from New Zealand, we will introduce a School Leavers' Toolkit to equip school leavers with practical skills for life such as financial literacy, budgeting and information on how to exercise their full civic and democratic rights.