

SNP Manifesto 2021

What we're doing for older people

The SNP has a proud record of supporting Scotland's older people while in government. From providing record health spending to free personal care, supporting older people to work and tackling loneliness we've worked hard to make Scotland the best place to grow old.

Re-elect the SNP to:

Invest in our NHS

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 want to see as much health care as possible provided in the community and closer to people's own homes, because we know that is what patients want. We will roll out more mobile health services for direct delivery of care, particularly in rural areas. This will include additional screening services, stroke units and mental health services.

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 will invest a further £100 million over the course of the next parliament to open a further two elective and diagnostic care centres, providing scheduled treatment and faster diagnosis on top of the five centres already open or under development.

Create a National Care Service for all

We will establish a National Care Service to oversee the delivery of care, improve standards, ensure enhanced pay and conditions for workers and provide better support for unpaid carers.

We believe social care services, just like health care services, should be provided on a truly universal basis, free at the point of use. We have already extended free personal and nursing care to everyone who needs it, regardless of age. If reelected, an SNP government will go further and abolish charges for non-residential care.

These changes can only be delivered with increased investment. We will therefore increase public investment in social care by 25% over the parliament, delivering over £800 million of increased support for social care.

Revitalise our communities

We will take forward our ambitions for 20-minute neighbourhoods – the creation of liveable, accessible places, with thriving local economies, where people can meet their daily needs within a 20 minute walk – enabling people to live better, healthier lives and supporting our net zero ambitions.

We will help revitalise high streets hit by the pandemic. The SNP will invest £275 million to support community-led regeneration and town centre revitalisation.

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We will build on the recent Scotland Loves Local campaign, which encouraged people to think local first, by piloting local loyalty schemes alongside a national Scotland Loves Local loyalty scheme, backed by a new £10 million fund.

Support unpaid carers

We will award a double payment of Carer's Allowance Supplement this year, worth £460, in recognition of the extra burden the pandemic has placed on carers.

We will introduce an improved Carer's Assistance payment to replace carers allowance. It will pay a further £10 per week to those who are caring for more than one disabled person, and increase the period of paying the benefit when a carer loses someone they have cared for from 8 weeks to 12 weeks.

Help in the colder months

We will replace the current UK winter fuel payment with a Winter Heating Payment for older people - maintaining its current rates and not means-testing it - helping around 1 million households and backed by around £180m a year.

In addition, we will replace the Cold Weather Payment, which is unreliable and can pay out infrequently, with a new stable annual £50 Winter Heating Payment to those low-income households currently eligible for Cold Weather Payments.

This will be an investment of £20 million every year and support 400,000 households, giving low-income households guaranteed support with energy bills.

Protect our planet and tackle the climate crisis

We recognise that action is required now to tackle the climate crisis and protect the planet for future generations.

We will take real action to transform how we heat our homes, to increase renewable energy and to invest in hydrogen as a fuel source, we will revolutionise our transport system electrifying our rail lines, switching to electric vehicles, increasing walking and cycling and investing in green jobs and industries for the future.

We will implement our ambitious Deposit Return Scheme for single use drinks containers next year to improve recycling, reduce litter and achieve our climate change targets.

Concessionary travel

Over one million Scots now enjoy free bus travel across the country, including under-19s, over-60s and disabled people.

To make bus travel a more attractive and reliable option, we will invest over £500 million to improve bus infrastructure and tackle congestion.

We will establish a Community Bus Fund to help support provision of services in local communities and enable Local Authorities to look at delivering different bus services in their area.

Promote culture and creativity

We will protect free access to our National Museums and continue to fund non-national museums and galleries through support for Museums & Galleries Scotland.

Taking Wigtown, Scotland's National Book Town, as a model, we will extend the reach of the arts by launching an open competition for further National Towns of Culture for example, Scotland's National Live Music Town, Folk and Trad Town, or Scotland's Visual Art Town.

Tackle loneliness and digital exclusion

As our society changes, there is increasing recognition of social isolation and loneliness as major public health issues.

We will develop a new five year plan focused on reconnecting people of all ages and tackling loneliness head on, backed by £10 million over five years - with £5 million in the first two years to increase the work organisations already do, fund new ones, and help them provide safe places online and in person.

Launched during the pandemic, our Connecting Scotland programme has helped thousands to get online by providing them with a device, data, training and support.

Over the next Parliament, we will go further to tackle digital exclusion by expanding the the programme and investing £200 million to support up to 300,000 households get devices, data and skills.