

SNP Manifesto 2021

What we're doing for young people

The SNP is determined that every child, regardless of their circumstances, should get the best start in life. Our ambition is for Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up.

We believe Scotland should be a land of opportunity.

Re-elect the SNP to:

Protect our planet and tackle the climate crisis

We recognise that action is required now to tackle the climate crisis and ensure Scotland becomes a net zero nation.

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.

Tear down barriers to learning

Covid-19 changed the way education is delivered. With the increased reliance on digital connectivity, the pandemic shone a light on the barriers of digital exclusion. We will provide every child in Scotland with a device to get online, including a free internet connection and the support to use it.

We will establish a National Digital Academy which will allow learners to access the full higher curriculum, regardless of age, school or location. This new approach would end the postcode lottery of subject choice, and enable people to study for their Highers whilst also being in work, or fulfilling caring commitments.

We will end the exclusion of poorer pupils from trips and practical activities by removing charges for less well off families.

We will increase the school uniform grant to at least £120 in primary school and £150 in secondary school.

Tackle classroom hunger

To make sure no child is hungry in the classroom, we will provide free school breakfasts and lunches to every primary school pupil, 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.

Strengthen our education system

We will invest a further £1 billion over the next parliament in measures to recover from Covid, improve attainment and close the attainment gap.

We will recruit 3500 additional teachers and classroom assistants in the next parliament, allowing teachers more time out of the classroom to prepare lessons and improve their skills.

We will take forward the recommendations of the OECD review of the design and flexibility of Curriculum for Excellence, to ensure that the benefits of CfE are delivered for all pupils.

We will ensure access for all young people to evidence-based prevention education on consent and healthy relationships and fund work in our schools, colleges and universities.

Support for mental health services

Mental health is one of the most important public health issues facing Scotland today. We will ensure at least 1% of frontline NHS spending is directed to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) support and services by the end of the parliament.

Our mental health strategy is helping to reshape how CAMHS is delivered, underpinned by the principle of 'Ask once, get help fast'. We will introduce a National Transitions Strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people experiencing mental ill health in their transitions to adulthood.

Safe places to play and connect

We will deliver a programme of activities for children and young people over the summer to help them socialise, play and reconnect following the experience of lockdown.

We will renew every play park in Scotland, so that all children have access to quality play in their own community, backed by £60 million.

Ensure opportunities for all

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.

We will continue our Young Person's Guarantee to ensure that every young person aged between 16 and 24 in Scotland has the opportunity, based on their own personal circumstances and ambitions, to go to university or college, get a place on an apprenticeship, training or work experience programme, secure a job or participate in a formal volunteering programme.

We remain absolutely committed to the principle that access to education should be based on the ability to learn, not the ability to pay. As long as the SNP are in government there will not be tuition fees in Scotland.

Financial support for young adults

In recognition of the impact Covid has had on the lives and opportunities of young people, particularly those

entering the jobs market for the first time, we will increase the age at which young people become eligible for council tax from 18 to 22. For a young person living in a Band B property that will mean an annual saving of around £750.

Freedom to travel

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

We will provide free bikes for all children of school age who cannot afford them and ensure every child in Scotland leaves school with the ability to cycle safely

Strengthen children's rights and representation

We will implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child within the first six months, as long as the UK Government does not seek to block us in the courts.

Building on the success of Scotland's first Citizens Assembly, we will establish an assembly for children and young people under 16 to ensure their better representation.

Reform the justice system for children and young people

Involvement in the justice system can be especially difficult and upsetting for children. We want to ensure that the journey from disclosure to recovery respects the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.

Instead of having to go to multiple different services in multiple locations, all the care and support a child and their family needs will be delivered under one roof - at the Barnahus, or Bairns' Hoose. We will ensure that every child victim/witness will have access to a Bairns' Hoose by 2025.

Keep The Promise

We want Scotland to have a care system that improves the outcomes and wellbeing of those it supports - and ensures that they grow up in loving environments. We remain fully committed to implementing the findings and recommendations of the Independent Care Review by 2030. We will keep the Promise.

We will invest £10 million to establish a new Care Experienced Grant. This will be an annual grant of £200 paid to support around 50,000 young care experienced people between the ages of 16 and 26 - who often don't have access to the 'bank of mum and dad' - with £2000 over a decade as they enter adulthood.