

Scottish Parliament Election 2016: Manifestos

Introduction

This briefing looks at party manifestos ahead of the 2016 Scottish Parliament Election on Thursday 5 May. The briefing focuses on pledges relating to our work and the services we inspect and regulate.

The 'Key pledges' section of the briefing draws out a number of pledges of particular significance to our work, while later sections provide a more general summary of all other relevant content in each of the main parties' manifestos.

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Key pledges

Conservatives

- Monitor health and social care integration to ensure delivery of objectives
- Reverse the Named Person policy

Greens

- A 'Living Wage Plus' of £9 and "more attractive" careers in social care
- "Meaningful access" to a GTCS-qualified teacher in every nursery

Labour

- Guarantee a social care package within a week
- Adopt the recommendations of UNISON's Ethical Care Charter
- Ensure a single complaints process across health and social care
- Develop a National Loneliness and Isolation strategy
- Conduct a review of end of life and palliative care

Liberal Democrats

- Extend childcare expansion to include all 2 year olds
- Extend the rights of people in care homes to cover matters such as access to the outdoors, the use of covert medication and the provision of meaningful activities
- Support 12 new centres across Scotland to provide supported accommodation for young people

SNP

- Review the number, structure and regulation of health boards and their relationships with local councils
- Review care capacity, funding and the structures it is directed through
- Expand free childcare to 30 hours for 3/4 year olds and vulnerable 2s, create 600 early learning and childcare centres, with 20,000 more staff
- Pilot childcare approaches, with a view to rolling out best practice
- Create a quality standard and induction programme for childminders
- Encourage childcare providers to give children two hours of age-appropriate physical activity, including one hour a week outside

UKIP

- Give mental health parity with physical health
- Repeal the Named Person policy

Scottish Conservatives

[A Strong Opposition – A Stronger Scotland](#)

The Scottish Conservative's manifesto makes clear that the document is not a "normal" manifesto for government but is instead a plan for "strong opposition" to the SNP.

The 'Programme for Opposition' lists a number of priorities for the party, including:

- increasing NHS spending and support for mental health services;
- reversing the Named Person policy and diverting funds to a new 'Crisis Family Fund' which, targeting deprived communities, would provide tailored support to families with complex needs on a payment-by-results basis;
- empowering school leaders and ensuring every child can read well, including better and earlier literacy and numeracy support in nursery;
- making childcare more flexible and extending hours for one and two year olds; and
- tackling anti-social behaviour and focusing on rehabilitation.

Health and social care

The Conservative manifesto includes a chapter entitled 'A world-class healthcare system for your loved ones', identifying priorities such as "protecting NHS funding with a health guarantee", "boosting mental health investment" and "putting patients in charge"

The manifesto includes a section focusing on the 'integrated approach to health and social care'. Here, the Conservatives pledge to:

- monitor the new health and social care partnerships to ensure the reforms are delivering their objectives;
- explore if the Attendance Allowance and DLA/PIP should be combined into the integrated health and social care system, through the devolution of control to either local authorities or the new health and social care partnerships;
- work with housing associations to tackle delayed discharge in hospitals and to enable data sharing with pharmacists before discharge to speed up the process;
- pilot Partnership for Excellence in Palliative Support (PEPS) services in Scotland; and
- support joint working with the third sector in all areas, in particular the Transforming Care After Treatment programme.

The manifesto stresses the need for a “properly” funded NHS and investment in staffing and capacity. In this regard, the Conservatives have pledged to:

- protect NHS spending through a ‘health guarantee’ to ensure the health budget rises annually by 2%, inflation, or Barnett Consequentials;
- gradually reintroduce prescription charges, with an expanded list of long-term conditions added to previous exemptions;
- ensure “sustainable and safe” staffing levels across all health boards;
- review of NHS targets to assess which ones help more people survive and get better;
- put pharmacies at “the heart of primary care” and expand the Minor Ailment Service by an additional £10m every year;
- increase GP budgets and the share of the budget GPs get every year;
- hire an extra 500 health visitors above present plans; and
- invest an additional £300m to improve mental health treatment, with an ambition to provide dedicated mental health support in every GP surgery and A&E department 24/7.

The Conservatives also highlight the need to establish “an element of personal responsibility” into the health system, pledging to:

- create a network of Recovery Centres combined with alcohol dependency support;
- improve information to patients, including an annual statement with information about local health and social care services; and
- move towards a “no decision about me without me” approach, allowing patients to co-decide on location and type of treatment.

Other pledges include:

- continued support for the Frank’s Law campaign to increase support for dementia sufferers under 65; and
- alignment of the Carer’s Allowance with Jobseeker’s Allowance to support over 60,000 carers in Scotland.

Children and Young People

The Conservative manifesto includes a chapter entitled ‘A better start in life for your children’ which identifies priorities such as extending flexible, high quality childcare.

The party has pledged to:

- target free childcare at children from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- prioritise the extension of childcare to a higher proportion of 1 and 2 year olds, with a gradual expansion of part-time hours to all 1s to 4s;

- allow parents to use their entitlement whenever they need it at approved childcare providers, including registered childminders;
- address “birthday discrimination” which impacts on entitlement;
- re-establish an independent inspectorate outwith Education Scotland; and
- support plans to give full bursaries to care experienced young people.

Justice

In a chapter entitled ‘A safe environment for your neighbourhood’, the Conservatives identify priorities around taking action on anti-social behaviour and community sentences, as well as focusing justice policy on cutting reoffending.

Scottish Green Party

[A better Scotland needs a bolder Holyrood](#)

The Scottish Green Party’s manifesto is based around the notion of ‘Scotland Can’ and argues that the party can bring “fresh, new, bold ideas” to Parliament, while holding bigger parties to account.

The manifesto includes chapters entitled ‘Scotland can care for all people’ and ‘Scotland can be a healthy society’, in which ‘top policies’ include a ‘Living Wage Plus’ for social care staff, an increased Carer’s Allowance, placing “wellbeing at the centre of government” and a “healthy start for children”.

Health and social care

The Greens argue that people who care are “undervalued and underpaid” in Scotland, pledging to campaign for:

- “more attractive” careers in health and social care, including a reduction in paperwork, increased time for development, a ‘Living Wage Plus’ of £9 for social care staff, and more autonomy for senior healthcare professionals;
- an increase in the Carer’s Allowance to £93.15 per week;
- improved working conditions for social care workers, including paid travel time, sick leave, skills training and an end to zero hours care workers conditions;
- redesign of the Carer’s Allowance, including a lower threshold for hours of care and a top-up for people who care for more than one person;
- the introduction of clear guidance to councils when assessing income to determine non-residential care charges, excluding Carer’s Allowance from assessments;

- adequate resources to implement new carer’s legislation; and
- the creation of an independent social care tribunal system to help carers and those they care for to realise their existing rights.

The Green Party also pledges to campaign for:

- a review of contracts with private providers in the health service;
- increased funding for the NHS;
- ensuring health and social care integration provides “joined up care with strong links between social, primary and acute care”;
- primary care services to receive resources to reduce waiting times, improve shared working, and ensure equitable provision;
- a commission to explore “how Scotland can develop a more inclusive culture that allows older people to live healthy and independent lives”;
- allowing local government to raise funds through progressive tax changes to pay for social care;
- a focus on delivery of “significant improvements” in palliative care;
- “comprehensive care plans” for people with cancer;
- equal consideration of mental and physical health across all health and social care sectors;
- access to appropriate healthcare for trans people and 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”; and
- action to counter the inter-generational effects of abuse.

Children and Young People

Other priorities identified in the manifesto include ensuring a ‘child-friendly society’ and a “healthy start for children”.

In relation to early years and childcare, the Greens have pledged to campaign for:

- “meaningful access” to a GTCS-qualified teacher in every nursery and 20 hours early-years education per week;
- delivery of high quality early years education that is child-centred and flexible for parents who work or study part-time; and
- an expansion of the Sure Start Maternity Grant and for health visitors to help families ensure they receive the correct financial support; and
- an expansion of community-based health projects and improvements to the Healthy Start scheme.

In relation to the care system, the Greens have pledged to campaign for:

- a “compassionate care system” to ensure that young people receive a “planned, supported transition out of the care system, [are] supported in education and have a right to return to care if needed”;
- adequate funding of the care system to ensure help is provided proactively before a crisis develops and to provide financial support to kinship care families at the beginning of a placement; and
- parity of support, based on need, for all care leavers whether they are looked after at home, in kinship care or in rented accommodation.

The Greens have also pledged to campaign for:

- exploring the introduction of a Young Carer’s Grant;
- reduced stigma and social pressures on children and support schemes to improve young people’s confidence and action to identify child mental health issues early; and
- stronger links between education and other children’s services with child poverty strategies.

Justice

In relation to justice, the Greens have pledged to campaign for increased support for domestic abuse services and protection of children from assault, including the removal of the reasonable chastisement defence.

Other

The Greens have made a number of campaign pledges in relation to human rights and equality, including opposition to any repeal of the Human Rights Act and advocating for a Bill of Rights to safeguard civil liberties.

Other campaign pledges relate to democracy and transparency, including a Democracy and Public Participation Duty for public bodies and a requirement on public bodies to designate a place on their boards for a ‘citizen governor’. The Greens also want changes to FOI legislation so it applies to arm’s-length external organisations and private companies carrying out public functions.

Scottish Labour

[Invest in Scotland’s Future: Both Votes Labour](#)

The Scottish Labour Party manifesto is focused around their pledge to use the Scottish Parliament’s new powers to “stop the cuts and invest in the future”. The party plans to set the basic and higher rates of income tax 1p higher than the rate in the rest of the UK, as well as setting a 50p top rate of tax, arguing that this would allow for additional investment in public services. Education, “good, affordable and flexible childcare”, the NHS and services for older people are among the areas highlighted as particular priorities.

Health and social care

Caring for Scotland

According to the manifesto, the care sector is “struggling, with councils overstretched and under resourced”. The Labour party says it will use the Scottish Parliament’s new powers to “stop cuts to local services” and invest in social care. In this area, the party intends to:

- guarantee that social care packages will be available within a week;
- adopt in full the recommendations of UNISON’s Ethical Care Charter, including paying care staff a Living Wage and ensuring: that staff are paid for travel cost and travel time; no zero-hours contracts; and adequate training for all staff before they enter the workplace.
- develop a National Loneliness and Isolation strategy;
- ensure that there is a single complaints process in place across the newly integrated system of health and social care;
- work to end care charges so that all aspects of social care are free at the point of delivery;
- create a new office of Carer’s Commissioner to champion the rights of unpaid family carers as well as ensuring the right to respite;
- up-rate the Carers’ Allowance to equal Jobseekers’ Allowance and support carers to stay in work while fulfilling unpaid responsibilities; and
- support unpaid carers in both further and higher education by not financially penalising them if they need to repeat a year because of their caring responsibilities.

Neurological care and research

Labour says it wants “everyone to have the dignity and care they deserve in their community, which means providing dedicated neurological care and support services – regardless of whether someone lives at home or in residential care – delivered by specialists who understand these complex conditions”. In this regard, the party pledges to:

- ensure that nobody under the age of 65 has to live in an old people’s nursing home;
- “re-write” the standards for neurological care; and
- conduct a review of end-of-life and palliative care services, including those offered to children and young people.

Making the NHS fit for the future

In a section focusing on the NHS, the party pledges to:

- tackle health inequalities by targeting wider social inequalities;
- protect NHS spending, by passing on increased revenue from taxes;

- give GPs the ability to form into clusters and invest more in local staff;
- extend the minor ailment service;
- invest in more advanced nurse practitioners.
- guarantee an appointment with a GP in 48 hours; and
- invest in four new major trauma centres.

Promoting good mental health

In relation to mental health, the party pledges to ensure parity between mental and physical health, supporting SAMH's call for a 10-year plan. Labour also says it will create a Cabinet-level post dedicated to mental health and invest in a range of mental health professionals.

Improving cancer care

The party commits improving services for people with cancer and says it will continue the development of after-treatment care using evidence from the Transforming Care After Treatment Programme.

Children and Young People

Giving our children the best start in life

In relation to early years and childcare, the party pledges to:

- match the planned increase in pre-school entitlement;
- fund a breakfast club in every primary school in Scotland;
- ensure the early years workforce has access to speech and language therapy skills;
- ensure health visitors and others have access to specific opportunities for professional development around children's language development;
- ensure training and qualifications in language development become a strong 'promotion pathway' for the early years workforce;
- set up a 'Fair Start Fund', providing additional money to head teachers and heads of centres in nurseries, primary schools and early learning centres to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds; and
- extend the free school meals commitment to cover all 2, 3 and 4 year olds who are receiving free early learning and childcare;

The party also makes a number of pledges in relation to protect and improve services for vulnerable and care-experienced children and young people. The party pledges to:

- "pause" implementation of the Named Person policy and ask the Children's Commissioner to carry out a full review;

- ensure that all care leavers who meet the entry requirements can secure a place at university and set up the Care Leavers' Higher Education Fund;
- improve the experience of care, including for children who are looked after at home, supporting local authorities and investing in improving practice and systems of support for kinship and foster carers;
- review the strategy for looked after children and set "challenging targets for improving outcomes".
- ensure the work of the Children's Hearings System continues to be "integral to the justice system";
- support education around issues of sexual consent for young people; and
- tackle commercial sexual exploitation by challenging demand and by supporting those involved: criminalising the buying of sex; decriminalising people involved in prostitution; and providing long-term support and exiting services for those exploited through prostitution.

The party also pledges to:

- ensure a comprehensive strategy for internet safety is brought forward in the first year of the Parliament;
- support the development of new treatment protocols and pathways to divert young people from substance abuse, alongside better education of the impact of drugs, including so-called 'legal highs';
- legislate to enshrine the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law; and
- shift the school inspection system towards unannounced inspections.

Justice

In relation to justice, the party pledges to pursue preventative measures to stop people offending in the first place or reoffending, as well as pursuing sentences that deliver rehabilitation, including a presumption against sentences of less than six months and an increase in community-based sentencing.

The party also pledges to create opportunities for redress for victims for whom the justice system has "failed", as in cases of historic abuse, and aims to halve the population of women prisoners and implement the recommendations of the Angiolini Commission on Women Offenders.

Scottish Liberal Democrats

[Be the best again](#)

The Scottish Liberal Democrat manifesto highlights the opportunity presented by the forthcoming election to "make Scotland the best again". The Liberal

Democrats argue that in areas including education, the NHS, civil liberties and at a local level, Scotland has lost its world-leading position during the tenure of the SNP. Also emphasises the view that continued membership of the EU is necessary to ensure Scotland's economy is strengthened and to guarantee public service investment, before calling for unity and the need to "move on" from the independence debate.

Children and Young People

One of the Lib Dems' major proposals is for a 1p increase in income tax across all bands, with the expected additional £505m to be invested in education.

The party plans to take forward the Scottish Government's proposed expansion of early years and childcare provision for three and four year olds to 1140 hours by the end of the parliamentary term. However, the party also pledges to:

- use its additional investment to increase flexibility for parents;
- extend entitlement to all two year olds;
- take new steps to give extra support to the most vulnerable families from an earlier age, working with health visitors;
- support nurseries to work with parents to improve their skills;
- offer additional access to a graduate-qualified professional as provision is expanded and offer free meals for all children;
- implement the findings of the Independent Commission for Childcare Reform, prioritising action to ensure provision is "high quality, flexible and extends beyond the school day if parents need it to be 'wraparound'";
- address problems parents have in getting access to their current entitlement for free provision;
- give local authorities statutory responsibility for mapping the provision of childcare in their areas in order to give a clear picture to parents;
- use increased investment in colleges to help train more qualified staff; and
- start a pilot project to give parents of new-born babies a "Finnish-style" baby box containing essential items.

Other pledges relating to children and young people include:

- a Scottish Pupil Premium of £1,400 for every primary school child and £900 for secondary school pupils from poorer backgrounds and looked-after children;
- part-time provision of courses to ensure those in work or with caring commitments can benefit from college education;
- a full bursary for care leavers to support their education;

- support 12 new centres across Scotland to provide supported accommodation for young people;
- require local authorities to monitor and account for youth homelessness outcomes, ensuring that they take their responsibility as ‘corporate parents’ seriously;
- prevent care leavers from being transferred into B&Bs or temporary accommodation by local authorities;
- incorporate the UNCRC into Scots law;
- raise the age of criminal responsibility to 12;
- legislate to prohibit physical punishment of children;
- keep the Named Person legislation under review; and
- increase investment in child and adolescent mental health services.

Health and social care

A key focus in the Liberal Democrat manifesto is mental health, with the party calling for mental health to be placed on the same statutory footing as physical health. In addition, the party pledges to:

- make more therapies available and training more mental health professionals, co-locating them with GPs, the police, A&E and in prisons;
- double funding to address waiting times for CAMHS;
- create new units for children and adolescents in Aberdeen and Inverness;
- continue to work on suicide prevention and increase support for survivors of childhood sexual abuse;
- fully update the Scottish Mental Health Strategy.
- set standards for the training of other professionals so that they are able to identify and address mental health problems;
- improve mental health support for service veterans;
- examine the establishment of ‘Crisis Centre; and
- increase mental health services in prisons, focusing on rehabilitation and tackling problems associated with addiction and drug abuse.

In relation to the wider health and social care landscape, the party pledges to:

- extend the rights of people in the care home system to cover matters such as access to the outdoors, the use of covert medication and the provision of meaningful activities, and extend help for people with special educational needs to access the services they need;
- give professionals greater scope to improve services through the Public Service Leadership and Empowerment Act;
- ensure the care workforce is paid the Living Wage;

- end care charges for personal care for people with degenerative illnesses such as dementia and Motor Neurone Disease;
- extend free personal care to people with dementia at all ages;
- extend the use of technology enabled care and tele-medicine.
- fund the NHS so it stays ahead of inflation and keeps pace with the rest of the UK;
- work with the Royal Colleges to reduce the burden of detailed targets;
- improve workforce planning in the NHS to ensure the retention and recruitment of the right number of staff, including publication of an annual report on workforce;
- take forward the recommendations of the new cancer strategy;
- extend the rights of GPs to social prescribing, including free access to exercise programmes or home insulation; and
- increase the number of support staff (nurses, allied health professionals and counsellors) working in general practice.

Justice

According to the Lib Dems, the social and economic cost of reoffending is “immense” and there is a need for a justice system that provides “meaningful rehabilitation”. As such, the party seeks to:

- introduce a new offence of domestic abuse;
- introduce a new presumption against short prison sentences of less than 12 months;
- ensure Community Justice Scotland is able to oversee the establishment of many more alternative sentences;
- support the Angiolini reforms on women offenders and apply the same principles in relation to male offending;
- extend throughcare for all prisoners;
- promote new partnerships with the third sector to help more prisoners after release; and
- change the criminal justice system views drug use, treating it as a health issue and addressing problems that often accompany addiction.

Other

The Liberal Democrats have also pledged to

- expand the role of the Scottish Parliament’s Public Audit Committee to allow it to consider how “the pressure to achieve top-down targets may distort the service provided to the public by specific groups of public sector workers, for example police officers, social workers and health professionals”;
- extend Freedom of Information to private and voluntary sector bodies performing public services; and

- extend the rights of disabled people by empowering them, supporting individual autonomy and overhauling the guardianship system – including introducing staged-guardianship - through an Adults With Incapacity Act review.

Scottish National Party

[Re-Elect](#)

Health and Social Care

Introducing a chapter entitled 'A Healthier Scotland', the manifesto states that the SNP will ensure that the NHS remains publically owned, publically delivered and free at the point of need, while aiming to deliver care as close to home as possible. The SNP says it will build on health and social care integration by ensuring the NHS "develops as a Community Health Service".

'Improving Social Care and Support for Carers'

The SNP pledges to:

- protect free personal and nursing care for older people;
- examine the introduction of the extension of free personal and nursing care to those under 65 with a diagnosis of dementia;
- make charges for social care services "fairer";
- ensure social care workers are paid the Living Wage;
- exempt War Pension for veterans and Guaranteed Income Payments under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme for those injured after April 2005, from consideration in assessments for care charges;
- revise existing charging guidelines so that war disablement pensions are fully disregarded from social care means tests;
- consult on the introduction of national guidance for care charges and, as part of this, consider the option of a cap that takes account of the costs of disability related expenditure;
- review care capacity, funding and the structures it's directed through, working to end 'time and task' based care and shift to care which focuses on outcomes;
- consider a national or regional approach to supporting carers, including the availability of short breaks, and how they can be guaranteed;
- work with young carers to improve services available to them;
- equalise the Carers Allowance with Jobseeker's Allowance;
- increase the use of the Carer Positive scheme, so that at least 30% of employers in Scotland are covered;

- give more focus to palliative care and consider the relocation of post-diagnostic services into primary care through the new dementia strategy;
- ensure everyone who needs it will have access to palliative care by the end of the parliament;
- ensure temporary accommodation is the same standard as permanent accommodation;
- introduce a one-week cap for families with children and pregnant women living in B&B accommodation “unless there are exceptional circumstances”;
- ask local authorities to ensure local development plans take into account housing needs of older and disabled people; and
- ensure that public funding for hospices for children have parity with public funding for adult hospices.

‘Investment and Improvement’

The SNP pledges to:

- ensure that the NHS revenue budget rises by £500m more than inflation by the end of the next parliament;
- invest an additional £1.3bn in health and social care partnerships, reforming primary care and increasing the number of GPs and nurses in communities;
- make sure the existing boundaries between health and integration bodies do not act as barriers to planning local services effectively;
- review the number, structure and regulation of health boards and their relationships with local councils with a view to reducing “unnecessary backroom duplication” and removing structural impediments to better care;
- develop how budgets are allocated, focussing on areas of clinical activity as well as geography;
- continue to “shift the balance of care” by increasing, in every year of the next parliament, the share of the NHS budget dedicated to mental health and to primary, community, and social care;
- take an outcomes-based approach to targets;
- place “innovative nursing and midwifery planning tools” on a statutory footing and explore how the model can be extended to cover other parts of the health and social care workforce;
- introduce national and regional workforce planning, including an increase in the number of consultants and greater use of clinical generalists;
- invest £3m to train an additional 500 advanced nurse practitioners to “maximise their leading role” in integrated care;

- retain the nursing and midwifery bursary and protect free tuition for student nurses and midwives;
- launch a discretionary fund of at least £1m for nursing and midwifery students experiencing financial hardship; and
- work to improve recruitment and retention and continue the policy of no compulsory redundancies in the NHS.

'Delivering a Community Health Service'

The SNP pledges to:

- bring together a range of professionals in GP surgeries, with all GP surgeries to have an 'enhanced pharmacist';
- continue to work with the BMA to deliver a new 3 year GP contract;
- maintain and further extend the GP opening hours programme
- recruit at least 250 Community Link Workers to work in GP surgeries and direct people to local services and support;
- increase GP training places from 300 to 400 per year and increase the number of GPs working in the NHS;
- implement the recommendations of the our of hours primary care review through a National Delivery Plan;
- train 1,000 paramedics over the next five years to work in the community;
- work with stakeholders to deliver enhanced community audiology services and testing; and
- sustain the progress that has been made to improve child dental health and continue to deliver the Childsmile programme.

'Improving Tertiary, Unscheduled, and Specialist Care'

The SNP pledges to:

- invest £200 million in a network of five new elective and diagnostic treatment centres in Edinburgh, Livingston, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness;
- create a major trauma network, utilising sites in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow;
- implement the new Cancer Strategy, investing £100 million in over 50 actions;
- continue to review the medicine appraisal system and introduce the option of a pause in the process to allow for negotiation and potentially avoid the need for reapplication;
- a new single national formulary will also be introduced to ensure quick and equitable access to new medicines; and

- support research into – and treatment of patients with – neurological conditions, including funding for three research PHDs in MND and a further three in MS.

'Improving Child Health'

The SNP pledges to:

- develop a new 10-year Child and Adolescent Health and Well-being Strategy, covering both physical and mental well-being;
- implement a new Framework for Families with Disabled Children;
- promote children's health and well-being right throughout all levels of education through age-appropriate and inclusive strategies and resources;
- create a new Maternity and Early Years Allowance;
- re-introduce a grant of £300 for those who have second and subsequent children;
- ensure low-income families receive a £250 grant when their child starts nursery, and again when they start school;
- support the health of pregnant women and new mothers through welfare foods;
- ensure every new-born in Scotland will be entitled to a 'baby box', offering essential items for a child's first weeks;
- continue the roll-out of the Family Nurse Partnership, offering the programme to vulnerable, first time mothers aged 20-24 and extending it to include more children at risk of moving into care; and
- recruit an extra 500 health visitors by 2018 so that every child benefits from a health development check at 30 months.

'Improving Mental Health Services'

The SNP pledges to:

- work with mental health charities, stakeholders and service users to put in place a ten-year plan to transform mental health care in Scotland, including for children and young people;
- ensure mental health conditions and physical health conditions are treated with parity, re-enforcing existing legislation;
- shift the balance of funding toward mental health services and invest at least £150 million more over the next five years;
- recruit mental health link workers in GP practices;
- ensure that the principle of "ask once, get help fast" is in force across the country by the end of the Parliament;

- examine innovative ways to deliver better mental health services for children and young people, bringing together healthcare and education;
- make sure devolved social security services are suitable for people with mental health conditions; and
- design employment and welfare programmes to take account of mental health conditions and bring an end to difficulties faced with the DWP.

'Building on Quality Improvement'

According to the manifesto, the Scottish Patient Safety Programme has brought about a range of improvements across health and social care which “have not taken place by chance but by the conscious application of improvement methodology”.

The SNP said it would examine ways to apply the approach in the wider public sector, including exploring the development of a centre of excellence for the use of improvement methodology in public services.

Children and Young People

'Transforming Early Learning and Childcare'

According to the SNP manifesto, over the next parliament the “most transformative infrastructure project will be the expansion of early learning and childcare”.

The SNP pledges to:

- expand the availability of free early learning and childcare to 30 hours a week for all three and four year olds and vulnerable two year olds by 2021,
- invest an additional £500m a year by 2021 for childcare expansion, as well as creating 600 new early learning and childcare centres, with 20,000 more qualified staff;
- provide free school lunches for all two, three and four year olds in early education, whether provided by the local authority or a partner provider;
- pilot a range of different childcare approaches to determine what works best for children and families, with a view to rolling out best practice across the country;
- ensure every nursery in a deprived community will have an additional teacher or childcare graduate to support children’s learning by 2018;
- continue to provide families with books, materials, advice and support through Bookbug and Play Talk Read;
- help more parents to take up more of their parental leave entitlement during children’s pre-school years;

- create a new quality standard and induction programme for childminders to deliver best practice and work with partners to encourage more childminders in communities where there are very few; and
- encourage all early learning and childcare providers to give children two hours of age-appropriate physical activity, including one hour a week outside.

Keeping Children Safe

The SNP pledges to:

- roll out Getting It Right for Every Child and support the implementation of the Named Person service from August this year;
- work with stakeholders to ensure opportunities for play, particularly to ensure communities have spaces where children can play safely outside;
- refresh the internet safety action plan, linking it to the strategy on digital participation, so that appropriate frameworks of training, support and information are in place for professionals and families, including children and young people;
- implement the Action Plan aimed at eliminating child sexual exploitation and take forward measures to “Stop and Listen” to children to give professionals and agencies the skills needed to take identify and take appropriate action when children reveal they have been abused;
- work to improve the child protection system, including reviewing the law to ensure it provides adequate protection against all forms of abuse, neglect, violence and harm;
- consider what more could be done to support the social work profession and encourage more people to train to be social workers.
- work with partners so that more newly qualified social workers get a guarantee of a full year employment after qualifying.
- work towards every professional working with children being trained on equality;
- implement the Looked After Children strategy and do more to provide support for children who are looked after at home;
- introduce a new national allowance for kinship care and foster care;
- continue to invest in services and projects which support children affected by parental substance misuse;
- review the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 to ensure the interests of children and their need to form and maintain relationships with the key adults in their lives are at the centre of any new statutory measures.
- invest in activity to make the process of finding safe, secure, permanent homes for children who cannot live with their parents

quicker, requiring local authorities to use the National Adoption Register; and

- listen to the experiences of young people leaving care to ensure they have the aftercare support they need and can return to care as a young adult if need be.

Justice

'A Smarter Approach to Justice'

The SNP says it aims to develop “a smarter, more progressive approach to criminal justice that tackles the underlying causes of crime and improves public safety”. In this regard, the party pledges to:

- establish Community Justice Scotland with the objective of providing strategic direction to the delivery of planning and community sentences;
- improve community-based alternatives to short-term prison sentences and support efforts to deliver effective alternatives to custody;
- collaborate with the Scottish Prison Service and other stakeholders on an approach to female offending that will include the development of a new model for the female custodial estate, with a smaller national women’s prison and local community-based custody units;
- consider measures in relation to how children and vulnerable people give evidence such as the use of pre-recorded evidence;.
- work with stakeholders on the development of a Human Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy;
- provide £14.5m over five years to support victims of abuse;
- remove the time bar on the right of victims to bring civil actions against abusers in cases dating from after 1964 and consider options for supporting victims of cases before 1964;
- complete the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry over the course of the next parliament; and
- legislate for a new specific offence to tackle domestic abuse.

Other

The SNP has also pledged to:

- legislate to have 50:50 gender equality in public sector boardrooms by 2020 and ensure public authorities gather diversity information to inform employment practices;
- establish a fund for young people who have been in care to support their work, training or educational opportunities;
- require all public bodies to evaluate the impact of policies on inequalities;

- produce a National Strategy for Young People with Disabilities;
- embed Scotland’s National Action Plan into the National Performance Framework; and
- work hard to protect human rights across the UK and continue to oppose plans to abolish the Human Rights Act.

UKIP Scotland

[Shake Up Holyrood](#)

Health and social care

UKIP pledges to:

- give mental health parity with physical health, offering appropriate treatment for those suffering with addiction and mental health issues;
- offer direct access to specialist treatment to pregnant women and women with children under 12 months with mental health issues; and
- increase mental health resources in the justice system.

Children and Young People

UKIP pledges to repeal the Named Person policy and to focus social service resources on children needing support.

Other parties

The Woman’s Equality Party’s [manifesto](#) pledged to: “Audit early years practice, along with Education Scotland and the **Care Inspectorate**, and update recommendations, so that all children experience education that actively promotes gender equality.”

The RISE [manifesto](#) includes a proposal for a “legal requirement for all care provision to be to the standard of the UNISON ethical care charter”.