

Bringing Scotland together

A *work*place and community agenda



Whatever decision Scotland takes on September 18, 2014, two key challenges remain.

Firstly, people of Scotland on both sides of the constitutional debate have sent a clear message that they want to live in a fairer, more inclusive society.

Secondly, whatever our decision, Scotland's next generation of leaders have an obligation to bring the two sides of the constitutional debate together.



Scotland is divided

Scotland is divided over the momentous decision about our constitutional future. We are also divided by income, wealth and power. Where we are born, where we live, where we work, the education qualification of our parents and our own life experience has too much influence on our choices and the chances that flow from them.

Scotland's affiliated trade unions are at the forefront of building solidarity amongst Scots and ensuring ordinary people have a say in their workplaces and communities.

This manifesto suggests a range of common sense policies to close inequality gaps, provide better opportunities to promote inclusion and prevent isolation amongst both young and old, bring public service staff closer to their communities, and to improve the living conditions of middle and low income Scots.

The next Scottish Labour manifesto must:

- Tackle inequality which permeates everything from health, to education, to access to opportunities.
- Tackle low pay and insecure employment, over half of those living in poverty are in work and too many are forced to live in the low-pay, no-pay cycle.

- Give young people a guarantee of opportunities which will set them up for life.
- Build a new approach to care for older people, which prevents isolation and recognises the contribution they make.
- Pledge a housing programme that meets the needs of everyone living in Scotland.
- Re-balance the Scottish economy with a national industrial strategy.
- Democratise our public services, building real engagement between public service workers and communities.

Here are a baker's dozen of policies that could drive the return of a Labour Government:

1. A more equal society

Health inequality is the main issue facing Scotland. Labour must make the case that more equal societies are better for everyone, not just the poor. The gap between rich and poor is unacceptable. Reducing health inequality will prevent 1000s of unnecessary deaths. This will require a redistribution of resources, a focus on preventative spending, and priority given to the very young. It also requires equality to be not just at the heart of the NHS, but also in housing, welfare and education policies.

2. Local democracy

Local democracy should be at the heart of our approach to public service delivery. Joined up integrated services designed from the bottom up, rather than top down centralisation. Paid for, in part, by a fairer property tax.

3. Care of older people

A new approach to care of older people which supports them to live active and healthy lives including social support to prevent isolation. Scottish Labour must pledge to build a new approach to care, which listens to the needs recipients, family carers and the staff who are delivering care - based on staff being given fair contracts, the living wage and the time to care for older people and their carers properly.

4. A new deal for young people

A new deal for young people which gives them a guarantee of employment, education and training through wrap around support, properly funded local college places and wider access to university for all - whatever your family background. This can only be built from a strong foundation including a network of properly resourced family centres, comprehensive early years education, and schools that provide a broad based education that challenges each and every child.

5. Housing programme

A housing programme that builds and renovates the homes that Scotland needs, including a major programme for social housing and credible regulation of the private rented sector.

6. A balanced energy policy

A balanced energy policy using a range of energy generation, not just wind farms. Delivered by a more diverse ownership including public, council and cooperative models, that breaks the dominance of the big energy companies. Energy at a price that eradicates fuel poverty once and for all.

7. Real community policing

Real community policing by giving local councils the powers to ensure Police Scotland reflects community needs. Delivering policing with a balanced workforce, not cosmetic targets that take police off the beat.

8. Criminal and civil justice

Access to criminal and civil justice for all. Not just those that can afford it. We need new legislation to protect workers from violence at work and proper compensation for all victims of crime. And investment in our community and workplace legal and advice services

9. An end to low pay

A new deal between the citizen and the public service workforce through a national framework which includes: meaningful staff governance; fair wages; training across all services; and the Scottish Living Wage. Extending this approach to the private and voluntary sector through a new industrial democracy (based on collective bargaining) - using procurement and other government initiatives. Labour must end low pay.

10. Protecting the environment

Protecting the environment for generations to come including real action to meet climate change targets. The public sector should set an example through procurement and meaningful staff engagement. A just transition plan should be a feature of a green growth strategy.

11. Public transport

Creating public transport which liberates all Scots - those with and without a car. This will only be achieved by returning Scotrail to public ownership as a first stage towards a reintegrated railway in Scotland, enabling transport authorities to regulate bus services in their area and keeping ferries in public ownership – making all accountable to the communities they serve.

12. Industrial strategy

Labour must rebalance the economy through an industrial strategy that builds our manufacturing base. We must learn our lesson from recent years. An economy which is reliant on the financial services sector is too high risk. We must support industry through a Scottish Investment Bank that provides opportunities for Scottish pension funds - investment that is currently flowing abroad.

13. Public ownership of Royal Mail

Labour must pledge to buy the necessary shares to bring Royal Mail back into public ownership.