



2024 Election Policy Guide

Introduction

This policy guide aims to assist our supporters and others with assessing the manifestos of the political parties in the UK General Election on 4 July 2024. It is not a manifesto and doesn't cover every policy area. Instead, it is a guide to the work we have published in recent years that points to the progressive policies we would like to see political parties adopt. Many policy areas have been devolved to Scotland. However, the political parties in Scotland still cover these policy areas in their manifestos, and this may also help in the development of manifestos for the 2026 Scottish Parliament elections.

Economy

- Progressive [taxation](#) is grounded in principles of fairness, social justice, economic stability, and democratic governance. By taxing higher incomes at a higher rate, society can more effectively address income inequality, promote economic growth, and invest in public services that benefit everyone. This should include:
 - ◆ Income tax bands and rates that ensure those with the broadest shoulders carry the greatest weight.
 - ◆ Taxing wealth and greater transparency over the profits of multinational companies.
 - ◆ Reform of the council tax and non-domestic rates with greater devolution of local taxation.
 - ◆ Effective measures to stop tax dodging.
- [Real pay](#) in Scotland increased in the second half of 2023 but remains below where it was two and a half years ago. Action starts by investing more in our public services – ensuring our key workers see a decent cost of living pay award in 2024 and protecting those on [low incomes](#) against cuts to the crucial local services they depend on. [Inflation](#) won't be reduced by curbing wage increases; even the IMF has pointed to rising company profit margins.
- Act to make [Fair Work](#) more effective using all the powers of the Scottish Government. While progress has been made on the Real Living Wage, more focus is needed on other principles, including collective bargaining, procurement, education, business incentives, [flexible working](#) and health and safety.
- A [Just Transition](#) to a net-zero economy must recognise that the state's role and industrial strategy are crucial to this process.

Public Services

- The pressures on [our NHS](#) are primarily the result of Scotland's health inequalities and the failure to invest and reform [social care](#), including a publicly owned [National Care Service](#). The NHS needs investment levels equivalent to other European countries, a realistic workforce plan, a focus on prevention, early public health interventions, and [occupational](#) health and safety.
- Devolution of powers to local government is the unfinished element of Scottish devolution. That must come with [fair funding](#) and support for vital public services like [libraries](#). We must build stronger, self-sustaining [communities](#) by creating [public services](#) from the bottom up.

- Closing the [education](#) achievement gap starts with investment in Early Years, followed by smaller school class sizes. The goal of Curriculum for Excellence can only be achieved if education is fully resourced. There needs to be a larger emphasis on active learning – not just at younger levels but at all levels throughout the secondary curriculum. Accountability must be based on trust, and the role of testing and exams needs to be examined.
- Reform of higher education, including consideration of restructuring on a [cooperative model](#). Colleges should return to a public service focus with collaboration, not competition, at the heart of its mission, with funding at the same level as other education tiers.
- End the [housing crisis](#) with a large-scale social housing programme and measures to curb landlordism by protecting tenants from unfair evictions and high rents.
- Public ownership of [bus companies](#) with investment to the same levels as other forms of transport.

Environment

- [Land reform](#) to make land work for the common good, not the private interests of a privileged few. That means more integrated and far-reaching legislative and fiscal policy action than the current proposals.
- Regulate and monitor [chemicals](#) in wastewater treatment sludge, sludge spread on land by farmers, and the monitoring of fertilisers.

Constitution

- We need to revisit the mechanisms that underpin Scotland's place in the UK, including all the [constitutional options](#) for Scotland.
- Integrating all strands of [human rights](#) work and linking them to current initiatives such as Fair Work is essential to provide a strategic focus, delivery and evaluation of a distinctive Human Rights Law in Scotland covering the public, private and third sectors. The Human Rights Act 1998 is an essential [protection](#) for our human rights.
- The devolution of [employment law](#), including employment and trade union rights, wages, equal opportunities, health and safety and immigration (partially).
- [Freedom of Information](#) legislation needs reforming to strengthen rights and enforce duties to boost transparency and accountability in Scotland.

Jimmy Reid Foundation

The Jimmy Reid Foundation is a think tank which brings together different voices from across Scotland to make the case for economic, environmental, political and social equity and justice in Scotland and further afield.

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