

BACKING THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Too often in recent years, decisions by governments at Westminster have undermined the ability of the Scottish Government to deliver as much as it would wish. This has included budget cuts as a result of austerity, questionable application of the Barnett Formula and long delays in giving approval for Scottish Government proposals, for example the mechanism to mitigate the Bedroom Tax in Scotland.

A strong team of SNP MPs at Westminster can do more to ensure that the UK government is not standing in the way of progress for Scotland.

Protecting a strong record of delivery

At the heart of this manifesto is our commitment to move away from the damaging austerity agenda of the current UK government, so that we can protect Scotland's public services from future Tory cuts and protect the progress that has been delivered by tens of thousands of dedicated public sector staff.

In health, with the SNP, the number of staff working in Scotland's NHS has risen to a record high, with over 10,000 more people now working in the NHS. These staff have delivered shorter waiting times, including in vitally important areas such as cancer treatment. While there is still work to do, the number of people starting treatment for cancer within 62 days of referral has risen from 84.5 per cent in 2007 to 94.2 per cent. Nearly two-thirds of people in Scotland now say they are satisfied with our health service, according to the most recent survey, compared to just two-fifths in 2005.

In our schools, against every main measure, education is getting better. We have record exam results and record

Working for a healthier Scotland

Since the election of the SNP government in 2007:

- There has been an increase of over 2,300 nurses and midwives in Scotland and 2,350 doctors
- More than 320 extra GPs work in our communities and there are almost 1,350 more consultants providing specialist care in our NHS, including a 170 per cent increase in A&E consultants
- We've seen an 8.8 per cent increase in the number of paramedics while the number of senior managers in the NHS is down 29 per cent.

We've protected NHS spending against Westminster austerity – and we will argue for increases in health spending across the UK of £9.5 billion above inflation by 2020-21 - £24 billion in total. This will deliver a total increase for NHS Scotland of £2 billion by 2020-21.

high number of school leavers in either work, training or further or higher education. The number of P1 pupils in Scotland taught in classes of more than 25 has fallen to just 451 this year – 97 per cent lower than the 16,845 children recorded in 2006. And the proportion of schools reported as being in 'good' or 'satisfactory' condition has increased again, to 83 per cent – up from 61 per cent in April 2007. That means the number of pupils in poor or bad buildings has more than halved since 2007.

And in our communities people are feeling safer. The crime clear up rate is the highest since comparable records began in 1976 and recorded crime has fallen for the seventh year in a row and is now at its lowest level for 40 years. We've also acted to tackle the scourge of knife crime. **The average prison sentence for handling an offensive weapon in Scotland is now three times**