

Education – an investment in all our futures

Under the SNP Government at Holyrood:

- Tuition fees have been scrapped – and more young people than ever before are going to university
- We've introduced the new Curriculum for Excellence and invested in new school buildings so more of our children can enjoy the best possible learning environment
- Pass rates for Higher exams have reached record levels, with children sitting the new National exams for the first time last year.
- And we've launched a £100 million Attainment Scotland Fund to support primary school pupils in some of our most disadvantaged areas
- **There are 25,000 apprenticeships available every year – and we have pledged to increase this to 30,000 by 2020.**

higher than in 2004-05. Crimes of handling an offensive weapon (including knives) have reduced by 62 per cent since 2006-07.

The biggest threat to this progress is another swathe of Westminster inspired austerity cuts, which could have a devastating impact on services across the country. Over half of the total planned cuts are still to come over the course of the next UK Parliament.

If we don't act now to end Tory austerity, Scotland's cumulative share of the proposed real-terms cuts over the next five years is estimated at around £12 billion - £2300 for every person in Scotland. That is why this election is so important, so we can choose a different path forward, which enables the SNP Scottish

Safer streets and safer communities

We've rejected the approach adopted elsewhere in the UK and chosen to maintain investment in 1,000 extra police, enabling Police Scotland to deliver record low crime rates:

- **Recorded crime in Scotland is at its lowest level in 40 years**, and the number of homicides has halved since 2007.
- **The clear-up rate for recorded crimes is at its highest since 1976**, when comparable records began.
- **Re-offending rates have fallen over the last decade**, with a 17 per cent drop in the average number of re-convictions per offender. SNP MPs will press for the revenue from court fines to be retained in Scotland and for Police Scotland and our Fire and Rescue Service to receive the same VAT exemption as other forces, with the money reinvested in safer communities.

Government to continue to deliver the high-quality services people in Scotland expect.

And it is a path that will enable us to build on the continuing economic recovery. Over the past 12 months around 46,000 more people are in work. That includes, in recent months, a record high number of women in employment in Scotland. And youth unemployment is at a five year low. **Two in every five business properties across Scotland benefit from zero or reduced rates through the Small Business Bonus Scheme** alone, supporting local job creators, and the latest figures show inward investment at a 17-year high. Overall, our business rates relief packages benefit around 100,000 companies.