

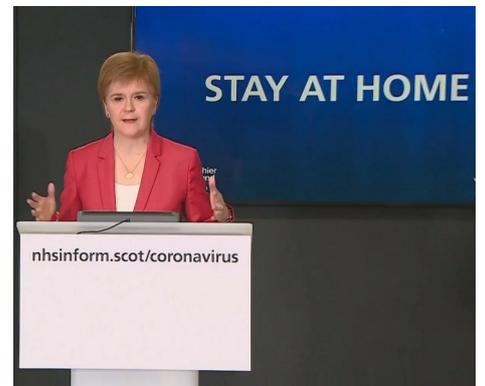
June  
2020

# Gordon Macdonald

Member of the Scottish Parliament  
for Edinburgh Pentlands



## Virtual Parliament Stay at Home



Despite lockdown, the business of the Scottish Parliament continues with a new virtual format added in to proceedings.

The first ever Leaders' Virtual Question Time took place on Thursday 9 April. The leaders of all the parties represented in The Scottish Parliament questioned the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, via the cameras on their computers.

Commenting on this change, Gordon said, "It is vital that the business of Parliament continues and that we are able to discuss with Government matters relating to the Covid-19 outbreak whilst also protecting the safety of members and staff.

"The Parliamentary Bureau has adapted this technology and now even committee meetings can be conducted remotely — as can be seen in the photograph of my own committee, the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee."

Gordon thanks all the staff who have worked hard to make this happen and allowed his committee to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on Scotland's businesses, workers and the economy. The committee has also scrutinised the new Protection of Workers Bill intended to prevent retail workers being abused for when doing their jobs.

Gordon went on to say, "Although we are limited in how much we can physically do in Parliament, we are still able to scrutinise proposed laws, and hear evidence."

The most important action we can all still take, in fighting Covid-19, is to stay at home in order to protect the NHS and save lives.

We have moved into Phase 1 of the route map out of lockdown. This means lockdown is being modified slightly but it is not over.

These measures remain in force: -

- People are to stay at home, as much as possible.
- Do not meet up with more than one other household a day (groups should be no more than 6 people) in an outdoor space, socially distancing.
- Most business and venues remain closed.

The relevant authorities, including the police, have been given the powers to enforce them — including through fines.

Representing: Baberton, Balerno, Blinkbonny, Bonaly, Broomhouse, Buckstone, Calders, Colinton, Colinton Mains, Currie, Dregghorn, Fairmilehead, Firrhill, Hermiston, Juniper Green, Kingsknowe, Longstone, Oxfangs, Parkhead, Ratho, Redhall, Saughton Mains, Sighthill, Spylaw, Stenhouse, Swanston, Wester Hailes and Whitson.

# ALSO THIS MONTH...

## Protected Trust Deeds



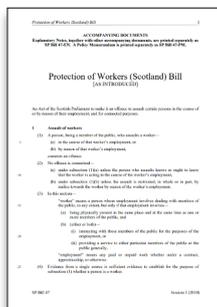
Beginning last year, the Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee is carrying out an inquiry on Protected Trust Deeds (a bankruptcy-related debt solution).

This follows on from concerns raised during its recent scrutiny of the Debt Arrangement Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2019 (DAS).

Gordon, a member of the Committee, noted, "Witnesses were concerned that Protected Trust Deeds were being heavily marketed and recommended to people in situations when they were not the best debt solution. There is the potential that they are effectively being mis-sold."

The Association of British Credit Unions described them as "one of the biggest issues facing our sector over the past few years" and Money Advice Scotland stated, "We have heard examples where so-called introducers or lead generators are paid up to £2,000 per referral" and that "In most cases we've come across where PTD was not the best option, it is likely that another form of debt relief such as bankruptcy was more appropriate."

## Protection of Workers Bill



To protect workers, a new Bill is being brought into law that will make it a specific offence to abuse, threaten, or assault workers providing services to the public. It will also make specific provisions for workers who provide age restricted goods, such as alcohol and fireworks.

As a member of the lead committee, Gordon commented, "Retail workers are at a higher risk of abuse and assault. Although assault is already an offence, this Bill now criminalises abuse and threatening behaviour towards retail staff doing their jobs."

He went on to say "Now, more than ever, we can see the crucial role retail workers play in our lives and we must make sure they are treated fairly and protected."

## Constituent Casework



For many, the restrictions of lockdown have exacerbated already ongoing problems.

Although Gordon's physical office is temporarily closed, Gordon and his staff continue to investigate and resolve constituent issues.

Continuing to encourage everyone to contact him if they are in need of any help or support, Gordon said "Whether the problem you are having is related to Covid-19 or about a local issue, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

"For anyone who was thinking of coming along to one of my drop in surgeries to speak to me, I am taking telephone meetings whilst my surgeries continue to be suspended due to Covid 19. Please call my office to arrange a suitable time."

### Contact Gordon Macdonald MSP

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### Monthly Surgeries

Due to the ongoing public health concern, in the interest of public and staff safety, Gordon's surgeries are suspended until further notice but he will continue to handle enquiries as usual.

# Working for Edinburgh Pentlands