

Gordon Macdonald

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Pentlands

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2020



A Budget for Health, Education, and Housing



Gordon welcomes that this year's Scottish Budget will ensure that lower and middle earners, up to 56% of all tax-payers, will pay less income tax than in the rest of the UK. No Scottish taxpayer will pay more income tax in 2020-21 than they did in 2019-20.

This Budget is set to deliver a National Concessionary Travel scheme offering free bus travel for 18s and under, Police Scotland will receive an uplift £60 million and local authorities will receive an increase in day-to-day revenue spending of £589 million.

The greatest commitment is to health with a £1 billion increase to £15 billion. Our A&E services are nationally recognised as the best in the UK and the number of staff in our health service is at record levels.

The Education budget will provide a real terms increase in funding to £3.57 billion, ensuring teachers are the highest paid in the UK. The aim to close the attainment gap will be supported by £120 million in Pupil Equity Funding to be spent at the discretion of head teachers.

Our budget also commits £645 million to almost double free provision of childcare to 1140 hours for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds. This will save families in Edinburgh up to £4,500 per child a year.

This year, Scotland will have a new social security system controlling £3.4 billion. A new Scottish Child Payment will be introduced, which will help 30,000 children out of poverty.

The Scottish Government remains committed to build 50,000 affordable homes over the course of this parliament. Since 2007, more than 89,000 affordable homes, including 61,356 for social rent, have been delivered.

Cheyne Gang Debate



Gordon hosted a debate in Parliament to celebrate the Cheyne Gang, a singing group that works with people with long-term respiratory conditions.

The Cheyne Gang, which first met in Cheyne Street, was started by three general practice nurses in 2013 as a research project, now comprises 120 members across Edinburgh, Glasgow, and beyond.

Gordon noted in Parliament that, "As the research shows, it is clear that singing is an inexpensive form of pulmonary rehabilitation.

We need this fantastic initiative to be given support, so that it can be rolled out across Scotland and other people with breathing problems can benefit from a song, a cup of tea and a blether.

Out and About...

School Leavers into Positive Destinations



National Statistics have reported that a record proportion of Scottish young people were in positive destinations three months after leaving school last year. The gap between those from the most and least deprived communities achieving a positive destination is the lowest since 2010.

The number of Edinburgh school-leavers becoming unemployed fell from 15% in 2010 to 3% in 2019. Over the same period, the number going directly to higher education rose from 37% to 43%.

Commenting, Gordon said, “For the ninth consecutive year, more young Scots are in study, training or work three months after leaving school than ever before.

“It’s particularly welcome that the gap between the richest and poorest communities for those moving into a positive destination continues to narrow.

“Curriculum for Excellence is delivering one of the ultimate aims of school education — to secure a positive next step in learning, life and work for our young people.”

Pension Credit Take Up Campaign



The DWP is currently running a 12 week national campaign raising awareness of Pension Credits eligibility.

Those with savings, a retirement income, or own their own home may still be entitled to Pension Credits.

An award of Pension Credit can provide access to a range of other benefits such as help with housing costs, council tax or heating bills.

To find out more and to check whether you are eligible, go to www.gov.uk/pension-credit or call 0800 99 1234.

Edinburgh College 50th



Edinburgh College recently celebrated 50 years of its Sighthill Campus. Gordon joined Lord Provost Frank Ross, Deputy First Minister John Swinney, and many former students and staff for a civic reception where many shared stories of their time.

Sighthill Campus was previously home to Stevenson College prior to the merger that formed the current Edinburgh College.

Gordon noted, “It was great to hear the many success stories from those who graduated from the college.”

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Monthly Surgeries — No appointment needed

- 1st Monday of the month, 6.30pm Wester Hailes Library
- 2nd Monday of the month, 6.30pm Carrickvale Community Centre
- 3rd Monday of the month, 6.30pm Currie Library
- 4th Monday of the month, 6.30pm Oxbgangs Library (Not 24 Dec)
- 5th Monday of the month, 6.30pm Ratho Com. Centre (Not 31 Dec)

NB: NO SURGERIES DURING PUBLIC AND BANK HOLIDAYS

Working for Edinburgh Pentlands