

## Useful Contacts

### Health

#### NHS Inform

[www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus](http://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus)

☎ 0800 028 2816 (8am – 10pm everyday)  
for general information only.

Call NHS 24 on 111 for advice if symptoms  
worsen or if fever is ongoing after 7 days

#### Shielding local support

[www.gov.scot/covid-shieldingcontacts](http://www.gov.scot/covid-shieldingcontacts)

### Contact Gordon Macdonald MSP

✉ [gordon.macdonald.msp@parliament.scot](mailto:gordon.macdonald.msp@parliament.scot)

☎ 0131 443 0595

📄 The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

📘 Gordon Macdonald MSP    🐦 @GMacdonaldMSP

### Gordon's 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.

### National Assistance Helpline

For those over 70 or receive the flu vaccine for medical reasons, do not have any access to the internet, and do  
not have anyone to help get essential supplies.

☎ 0800 111 4000 (Open office hours Monday to Friday)

**This helpline is for those who cannot leave home and who cannot get help online.**

### Domestic Abuse Helpline

[www.safer.scot](http://www.safer.scot)

☎ 0800 027 1234

### For Business Support

[www.findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice](http://www.findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice)

☎ 0300 303 0660

### Easy-Read Coronavirus Guidance

[www.scd.org.uk/information-on-coronavirus](http://www.scd.org.uk/information-on-coronavirus)

☎ 0141 248 3733

### Energy Bills?

Home Energy Scotland

☎ 0808 808 2282

### For Older People

[www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)

☎ 0800 12 44 222

**F** Face coverings  
**A** Avoid crowded places  
**C** Clean your hands regularly  
**T** Two metre distance  
**S** Self-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms



### Remember FACTS

I would urge residents of Edinburgh Pentlands to remain vigilant  
and continue to follow the key public health advice to help  
suppress coronavirus.

The First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, launched a new awareness  
campaign across the country to help us to remember to comply  
with the most recent public health guidance and measures that  
are implemented.

The campaign is called FACTS, an acronym designed to remind  
people of the steps they need to take: "F" for face coverings in  
enclosed spaces, "A" to avoid crowded places, "C" to clean your  
hands regularly, "T" to maintain two metre distancing, and "S" for  
self isolation and to book a test if you have symptoms.

I know many might think about breaking the rules to go back to  
normal more quickly, however, as noted by the First Minister, "If we all keep doing the right thing I am more optimistic  
than I have been in a long time that we are now firmly on the track to getting normality back into our lives."

## Gordon MacDonald MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands Constituency



### Annual Report 2020/2021

## Delivering for Pentlands — 2021 Programme for Government

It has been a very strange and challenging year for us all. We are living in unprecedented times. COVID-19 has been  
the single greatest public health crisis of our lifetimes. The impact on our health, economy, and indeed our whole way  
of life, has been profound. The Scottish Government has detailed a Programme for Government, *Protecting Scotland,  
Renewing Scotland*, that I believe will safeguard Scotland against the continued risk from COVID-19.

The virus has put significant pressure on employers in Edinburgh. To help counter this problem, the Programme will  
introduce a **National Transition Training Fund** to support up to 10,000 people facing redundancy and unemployment  
and put in place an **Inward Investment Plan** to create 100,000 high value jobs over the next decade to boost GDP.

For the young people in my constituency, there are plans to introduce a **Scottish Youth Guarantee** to ensure every  
young person has the opportunity of work, education, or training. Furthermore, applications for the **new Scottish Child  
Payment** open in November 2020, with the first payments to be made next year. Parliament will also deliver a  
revolution in children's rights by **incorporating the UNCRC into Scots law**. There will also be **£135 million spent toward**

**1,400 additional teachers and 200 support staff** to ensure young  
people can catch-up on any lost education — this will increase  
teaching opportunities in Edinburgh Pentlands.

Lack of affordable housing is a problem for many in Edinburgh. To  
combat this, the Programme commits to **complete 50,000 affordable  
homes** (when safe to do so), and set a 20-year vision for energy  
efficient, zero carbon housing. Over 500 affordable homes have  
already been built in the constituency in the last few years. An  
additional **£1.6 billion will go towards low carbon funding**, including  
investments in heat and energy efficiency.

Being on the outskirts of the capital city, transportation and  
information infrastructure is vital. £500 million will go towards  
transformational **active travel infrastructure** and to enable **50,000  
people to get connected** to digital technology.

Other proposals are to establish an independent review to deliver a  
**national approach to care and support services** and to launch  
**Pharmacy First** to improve access to community health services.

I was very pleased to see the determination in the Programme to  
rebuild an economy and society that is stronger, fairer, and more  
sustainable for people across every community in Edinburgh  
Pentlands. We have an opportunity, not simply to go back to how  
things were, but to address many deep-seated challenges.





## Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group for Independent Convenience Stores



Convenience stores are the cornerstones of our communities. Since being elected, I have set up and run a Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group (CPG) on independent convenience stores. Scotland has more convenience stores per head of population than any other part of the UK and these stores provide over 41,000 jobs in our communities – I believed it was time this important sector in the Scottish economy got the recognition it deserves. I was pleased that this was hailed as a key development in its political engagement work by the Scottish Grocers' Federation (SGF). The Group is a unique platform for MSPs to engage with retailers and stakeholders from across the supply chain. Since being established, the group has progressed issues and challenges, such as the effects of

the Deposit Return Scheme. I am glad that it offers the sector the opportunity to speak directly to the decision makers about policy and enables more close working.

## Coronavirus

Increased protection for tenants



## Supporting Tenants

Throughout the coronavirus crisis, I have been contacted by numerous tenants struggling to pay their rent due to the virus. A new £10 million support fund introduced by the Scottish Government will help many people across Edinburgh Pentlands with housing costs during the pandemic. The Tenant Hardship Loan Fund will open in early November. This fund will offer interest-free loans to those unable to access other forms of support for their housing costs.

The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) fund which helps tenants in receipt of benefits will also increase by £3 million, bringing the total to £19 million. This is in addition to the £60 million budget already being used to fully mitigate the bedroom tax. Further to this, tenants in Edinburgh will also benefit from the 6 month to extension (to March 2021) to the emergency legislation that was put in place to help protect tenants from eviction during the coronavirus pandemic. Due to the ongoing feedback I have received from constituents, I have been pleased to support these measures as the MSP for Edinburgh Pentlands.

A new one-off **£250 payment** to help 16-24 year olds with the cost of starting a new job



## £250 Job Start Payment

I am aware that for many younger people living in Edinburgh, entering employment for the first time (or after a period of unemployment) involves costs. A new benefit that will support 16 to 24 year olds in Edinburgh Pentlands is the Job Start Payment.

It is a one off £250 payment to help with the costs of starting a new job. The upper age limit rises to 25 for care leavers and the payment rises to £400 if the person has a child. In its first year, it is estimated around 5,000 young people right across

Scotland will benefit from this new financial support — with up to 500 from Edinburgh.

The new Scottish Child Payment could support up to

**194,000** children under 6

## Scottish Child Payment

Despite Edinburgh being the wealthiest city in Scotland, there are also areas of deprivation. The Scottish Child Payment is an ambitious and ground-breaking new benefit. The payment will give eligible families £10 a week per child under six to assist with living costs. Applications will be taken from November before it is launched mid February 2021, with first payments to clients starting from the end of February 2021.

When this additional £10 per week per child becomes available, it will be a lifeline for many families. I am very proud to support the Scottish Government's commitment to tackling child poverty. This payment, together with the Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods, will provide over £5,200 of financial support for eligible families by the time their 1st child turns six. For 2nd and subsequent children this will provide over £4,900.

This Scottish Child Payment will help families in Edinburgh Pentlands and I would encourage constituents to apply.

## New Affordable Homes

There are many new affordable homes being built across the city: -

- 85 houses for mid-market rent on the empty brownfield site of the former Hunter's Tryst Primary School in Oxbgangs Green,
- 69 housing association flats for on the corner of Kingsknowe Golf Course off Clovenstone Gardens,
- 184 new, high quality, affordable homes — 96 for social rent, 88 for mid-market rent – in North Sighthill.



The developments are being built in addition to previous developments of 183 homes in Harveter's Way in 2017, and other affordable housing development in the Calders and Hailesland Place.

The Scottish Government will help to fund the construction of these properties with a subsidy of up to £72,000 with Edinburgh Council or the registered social landlord contributing the rest.

I am very pleased that much needed social and affordable housing is being delivered to the residents of Edinburgh Pentlands and it is good to know that there are several more developments in the pipeline in and around Edinburgh. Making sure that everyone has a safe, warm, and affordable home is essential for this country to become fairer and more prosperous.

## Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee



Despite lockdown, the business of the Scottish Parliament has continued with a new virtual format.

It is vital that we are able to discuss matters relating to the Covid-19 outbreak with Government whilst also protecting the safety of members and staff.

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

I would like to thank all the staff who have worked hard to make this happen and allowed my committee to discuss the impact of Covid-19 on Scotland's businesses, workers and the economy.

Specifically, the committee has scrutinised the new Protection of Workers Bill which seeks to prevent retail workers being abused when doing their jobs. The Committee is also carrying out an inquiry on Protected Trust Deeds (a bankruptcy-related debt solution) following concerns that they were being heavily marketed and recommended to people where they may not be the best debt solution.

## Youth Guarantee

The Scottish Government have rightly taken unprecedented steps to protect workers and businesses, but young people should not be behind. Therefore, I very much welcome the new £60 million Youth Guarantee announced by the Scottish Government, which will guarantee the 65,000 16-24-year-olds in Edinburgh a job, a place in education or a place in training. The funding will be divided as follows: -

- £30 million through local authorities to help local partnerships to deliver employability support for young people
- £10 million to create additional opportunities in colleges
- £10 million additional funding for Developing the Young Workforce, the Scottish Government's internationally recognised Youth Employment Strategy
- £10 million to support pathways to apprenticeships

Now, more than ever, it is vital that the young people of Edinburgh are prioritised. With this guarantee, we can avoid youth unemployment in Edinburgh Pentlands becoming the legacy of the pandemic.