

# Working Together for a Caring and Healthier Scotland

## 5 Introduction

10 In July 2008 we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the National Health Service. The Prime Minister described it as “not just a great institution but a great, unique and very British expression of an ideal - that healthcare is not a privilege to be purchased but a moral right secured for all”.

15 The NHS is the greatest embodiment of fairness in our country. The principles with which Labour established health and housing as social services remain strong and they underpin all that we do in working together for a caring and healthier Scotland.

Our communities perform a crucial role in delivering front line care and must be actively involved in shaping their own futures.

20 Our National Health Service must remain free at the point of access, free for all, and always based on need.

A new housing strategy for the next century should be driven by Labour’s principles.

25 This year marks the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ground breaking housing reform, known as the ‘Wheatley Act’, which established the provision of adequate housing as a social service. These difficult times require a fresh approach. The future of housing in Scotland must be driven by Labour in partnership with key stakeholders from both the public and private sector. We must strive to improve standards and meet demand, providing fair chances always.

30 Labour recognises the challenges which arise from an ageing population. We believe that our primary and social care policy, alongside a wider housing strategy, must address this.

## 35 Labour delivered for the people of Scotland

40 Before Labour came to power people questioned whether the NHS could survive. It is a testimony to the extraordinary work done by all NHS staff – backed up by Labour’s extra investment – that the NHS is now more firmly than ever part of the fabric of our national life. This is an achievement that should give us the confidence to look forward with ambition to an even greater future for the NHS.

45 Before 1997, NHS Scotland was suffering badly from years of Tory under-funding. There was a winter crisis every year. Hospitals were short of staff, delays for treatment were long. Too little effort had been put into tackling Scotland’s chronic health problems and health inequalities.

5 Scottish Labour worked hard to put that right. Spending per head on health doubled to record levels. Nearly 700 extra doctors, over 5,000 extra nurses plus other members of the health team were employed with higher pay and improved conditions. Hundreds of millions of pounds was invested in new hospitals and new health centres and GP surgeries in the largest building programme for decades.

10 The result was faster, better treatment for patients. Waiting times were reduced to the lowest ever and at the same time there was a big increase in operations. With Scottish Labour, there was remarkable progress in tackling Scotland's big killers. Deaths among the under-75s from cancer are down 15% since 1997, from strokes by 40% and from heart disease by 45%.

15 We brought a new focus to promoting healthier lifestyles, ending health inequalities and improving mental health care and treatment. This, and further investments in the NHS, social work and voluntary services within local communities has improved the capacity of traditional services to help support vulnerable people in their own homes and communities. Our ban on smoking in public places was groundbreaking legislation: it is popular and it is saving lives. Initiatives to increase physical activity and tackle obesity among children and in the general public were long overdue.

25 We made progress in tackling Scotland's housing problems, introducing world-leading homelessness legislation. We helped registered social landlords meet demand and gave greater protection for tenants in the private rented sector with our landlord registration scheme.

30 Labour has always ensured that the most vulnerable in our society are not forgotten, and free personal care was the vanguard of turning our values into law. Free central heating for pensioners and free bus travel provided a comprehensive package to guarantee dignity and ensure opportunity.

35 Labour made progress in sport during its term of office. We established the Scottish Institute of Sport in Stirling and developed the idea of a University of Sport. We worked with Scotland's largest council to secure the Commonwealth Games for 2014 and developed a national facilities strategy leading to substantial investment across Scotland. We supported funding for Supporters Direct in Scotland to give Scottish communities greater control over Scottish football.

## 40 **Scotland is now at risk**

45 Despite significant progress, many of our communities still feel that the NHS modernisation programme, which created our new state of the art hospitals, led to centralisation of some services, putting us at odds with public opinion that this was not in the best interests of local communities.

Despite the record levels of investment in the NHS, more resources and different approaches are needed. Our population is getting older, and health inequalities stubbornly

remain. Labour believes that our communities must be consulted on major changes in services and have a greater say in the care they receive.

5 We must address the risks created by the SNP government's failure to face up to the next stage of improving Scotland's health, housing and social care.

10 Crucially, funding for the NHS has not been prioritised by the SNP government. While in the last year there has been a 1.4% increase in the total health portfolio, health boards will have received a 0.5% increase in 'real' terms, taking no account of actual health cost inflation. In comparison, health spending in England rose by 3.9%.

15 The desperate search for efficiency savings by the SNP is exerting pressure on frontline staff and impacting on patient care. Despite the best efforts of NHS staff, poor preparation and planning by the SNP government meant that vulnerable patients did not receive appropriate care over the last winter.

20 The failure of the SNP to establish a viable alternative to PPP means that Scotland's hospital modernisation programme has ground to a halt. The NHS estate, both hospitals and health centres, require continuing attention and modernisation.

25 Instead of increasing the number of NHS beds, there has been a decline of more than 100 beds under the SNP and bed blocking is once again increasing in some areas. It is important that Labour policy is driven by the need to maintain and increase capacity where it is most needed.

There has been little action against hospital superbugs, and no real action plan executed to tackle this problem. Implementation of our experts' plan, published in December 2008, would make considerable progress towards ensuring that patient confidence is restored.

30 At a time when the demand for affordable housing has never been greater, the number of new homes completed has fallen. Over 200,000 are on housing waiting lists and this number will rise as a result of the economic downturn.

35 The SNP announced that they were spending £100m on housing in August 2008, but by January 2009 only a third had been allocated. We need viable measures and long term investment to increase the availability of affordable housing.

40 Vulnerable families who face losing their homes need support now. Scottish Labour continues to press the SNP to protect Scottish families from repossession and match the action taken by Labour at Westminster.

45 Scotland faces significant future challenges as our population ages and people live longer. The number of over 75s will rise by 81% between 2006 and 2031. This means substantial investment in adapted housing and new technology as well as care services will be required to allow the elderly and disabled to live with dignity in their own home. We also face challenges in addressing the health needs of an increasingly diverse ethnic population.

Free personal care has been successful in giving vulnerable people dignity and access to the care they need. Cuts in funding, and increasing charges for home care are causing difficulty for many, resulting in bed blocking, and we must develop policies which see our health and social services working much more closely together, with personalised care plans based on individual needs and circumstances.

Sport is developed mainly at a local level, progressing into national teams and national individual achievements. Labour believes that with greater support from the Scottish Parliament local councils can begin to tackle the range of challenges that sports policy may face in the next few decades. We believe local authorities should have the opportunity to bring forward initiatives to improve local sports infrastructure, sport at school, maintenance of community clubs and elite development.

## 15 Discussion for the Future

### A fairer, healthier Scotland

Health services should be as close to the patient's home as is practical and safe. Primary care should be delivered in an integrated way with social care and public health to deliver a comprehensive service. Scottish Labour recognises the need to move the focus of NHS Scotland from being a reactive service for ill health, towards being a proactive service for health and wellbeing.

Of course, when we become ill we want the best quality care in the most modern and technologically advanced hospitals and health centres.

Health isn't just the absence of disease and it's about more than just physical fitness. It's also about mental and physical well-being, and the energy and self-esteem to achieve what you want to achieve. That means it is relevant in our schools and workplaces as well as in health centres and hospitals.

- How can future services balance prevention, diagnosis and treatment?
- Should we introduce a regular health checks and walk-in services when it's needed?
- How do we provide appropriate support for people with long term conditions, and those who require palliative care?
- Targets have been important in increasing the quality of the service in Scotland, but does the method in which targets are used need to be reviewed?

Looking after the health of the whole community means that GPs and health professionals need to be close to their community and well-connected to all the other services, especially vital local authority services, that help everyone stay well. Like the hospitals, they'll need modern facilities and well-trained staff. Promotion of health is the responsibility of every public service. People need to have the skills and resources to promote public health in our neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces.

Labour believes the old barriers between Primary health care and social care services need to be lifted. The barrier to joint working between health, housing and social services needs to be removed. Preventative care services need investment in order to help avoid or at least delay people requiring intensive care. We should facilitate learning from existing good practice in delivering quality care services. Innovative approaches to providing care in the community such as the introduction of electronic monitoring systems and supporting people taking control over their own care through different models of independent living should be introduced.

- 10 • How can we ensure adequate resources are shifted to community settings to provide the care needed to allow elderly and other vulnerable people to remain in their homes?
- How can we provide continuity of care from the health service and social care services?
- 15 • How can we give communities, and in particular those who use the services, greater power over health and social care provision?
- How can we involve public service workers in developing our health and social care services?

20 Carers play an invaluable role in supporting people to live in their own homes, and be part of the local community. Their contribution should be recognised by fair rules, support and rewards. Access to respite services and shared care arrangements should be facilitated, with specific services available to meet the needs of young carers, and aging parents caring for those with disabilities or leaning difficulties.

- 25 • How can we best recognise, reward and support carers in Scotland?

### Health inequalities are unfair

30 Labour's key priority is to end health inequalities: people should not be condemned to a life of ill-health because of poverty. Despite the massive investment since 1997, inequalities in health have not yet been successfully addressed in all areas. A fair chance in life must mean a healthy life.

35 Generally, the better off you are, the healthier you are. Poorer people tend to fall sick more often. Scotland has pockets of real poverty and that harms Scotland's health. It's in those areas that there are more people with long-term illness and long-term poor health.

40 At a younger age, suicide and drug-related problems are more prevalent for people in deprived areas, 34 per cent of all premature deaths can be attributed to deprivation and at an older age key diseases are more prevalent.

45 Alcohol-related deaths have risen over the last 20 years, and the increase has been more pronounced in the most deprived areas.

Compared with people living in the most affluent areas, people in the most deprived areas are 2.7 times more likely to be admitted for depression, 3 times more likely to commit

suicide, 6 times more likely to be admitted with schizophrenia, 10 times more likely to be admitted with an alcohol related problem and 33 times more likely to be admitted because of drug misuse or addiction.

5 We must tackle the poverty that underlies poor health. Inadequate housing, low pay and unemployment all impact on health and wellbeing.

- How do we best tackle health inequalities?
- How do we ensure health teams, including GPs, in poorer areas have the extra resources they need to tackle deep rooted health inequalities?

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Smoking, excessive alcohol intake and drug use are more prevalent in areas of deprivation. Scottish Labour therefore understands that we need to take co-ordinated action across policy areas if we are to make a real impact on Scotland's most persistent health problems.

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Drug-related deaths increased by 25 per cent between 2005 and 2006, from 336 to 421. The fact that thirty-eight per cent of these deaths occurred in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde area highlights the need to tackle health inequalities.

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- What must we do to reduce smoking in Scotland?
- How do we best tackle excessive alcohol intake?
- What more should the drinks industry do to help tackle alcohol abuse?
- How do we improve access to treatment and rehabilitation, supporting a wide range of treatment options, for drug users?
- What more can we do to support families who live in households experiencing drug and alcohol misuse or other addictions?
- How do we improve Scotland's sexual health?
- How do we improve access to dental services for everyone?
- How do we improve the health of expectant mothers and make pregnancy safer?
- How can we improve the mental health and wellbeing of our communities?

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Between 1995 and 2003, obesity increased from 16% to 24% of men aged between 16 and 64, and from 19% to 27% for women. Scotland has the second highest rate of obesity among developed countries, behind only the USA. Only 36 per cent of adults in Scotland meet the recommended level of physical activity per week.

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- How do we improve Scotland's physical fitness?
- How do we improve Scotland's diet?

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Scotland ranked 22 out of 24 in a recent report on the wellbeing of children, with suicide rates, dental health and teenage pregnancy rates contributing to this low ranking.

- What can we do to improve the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of Scotland's children?

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### Fair rules and fair chances for housing

Changes in the global economy mean many people may be rethinking their housing options. We need to tackle the inequalities in housing that persist, involving the individuals themselves when considering the housing options that best suit their needs. As a society, we should not tolerate over 200,000 waiting endlessly for affordable housing. We need to increase investment in the provision of affordable housing to people, whether they want to rent or buy their home, using the skills within our Direct Labour organisations to meet these needs.

We need a balanced housing market offering a genuine choice to people, whether they rent from the Council, housing cooperative or housing association, a private sector landlord or factored tenancy, own their home or have shared ownership. Our future housing strategy should enable people, when they wish to remain in their own communities. It is unfair that people in rural communities often have fewer housing choices than elsewhere.

Young people and single people still face a battle to find a home. Scottish Labour must address the housing market in challenging circumstances and ensure that those searching for their first home are given choices of rental or ownership from a range of providers.

We will support both householders and developers to meet Scottish Building Standards, but we need to have flexibility to go beyond this to meet the environmental challenges of the future.

Our ageing population will require more suitable housing be made available. Scottish Labour must ensure that standards are raised to provide warmth, dignity, comfort and fairness for our senior citizens.

- How do we tackle problems around land availability to give councils and housing associations access to land to build on at affordable prices?
- How can we provide better support for housing cooperatives?
- How can we support shared ownership as a means of helping first-time buyers?
- How can we ensure people in rural areas have access to appropriate housing choices?
- Are there innovative ways of encouraging good private sector landlords to provide housing at affordable rents such as factored tenancies?
- How should we modernise existing run-down social housing stock and ensure it meets quality housing standards?
- What role can housing play in the regeneration of our towns and villages?
- Should we give social landlords greater discretion over whether to and on what terms houses should be sold to tenants?
- How can we help all households adapt their homes to their needs, from environmental to accessible?
- To what extent should our public services be able (or expected) to manage local communities?

Scottish Labour blazed a trail towards tackling homelessness by passing legislation that addressed "rooflessness".

- Yet how do we support the “hidden” homeless in the future?
- How will we address issues around overcrowding or inadequate housing?

5 Fair chances at sport for all

From 2010 onwards Scotland will have a decade of sport that includes some of the most prestigious events of the sporting calendar. The largest, developed by Glasgow City Council, is the Commonwealth Games 2014. The Ryder Cup 2014 is also a major opportunity, especially because Scotland is the birthplace of golf. The International Children’s Games will be hosted in Lanarkshire in 2011, demonstrating the relevance of sport to all ages.

Scotland must use these events as the catalyst for creating a sporting legacy for the whole country. That means actions must be taken forward between now and 2014, with an objective to reach beyond these dates to achieve a long term benefit.

Sport fosters a sense of local cohesion and generates confident and active citizens. Success in sport also assists in developing national confidence for all Scots.

Throughout Scotland there are still too many communities with poor quality sports facilities and under-developed community clubs. Unlike a number of other European countries, Scotland does not have a consistent approach to the relationship between community clubs and local schools.

We must continue supporting ‘elite’ sport, and the pathways to it. We need to invest in developing grassroots sports and public swimming and sports facilities. We should consider funding free swimming lessons and free access to sports facilities, accompanied by schemes which encourage and support young people to participate in sport and physical activity.

Planning and health are closely linked and our streetscapes, buildings, open spaces must be designed to encourage and help people to be physically active.

- How do we get people involved in sport and physical activity from a young age and how do we maintain that involvement?
- How do we capture the legacy of the Commonwealth Games 2014 and build enthusiasm for sport and for community participation?
- How do we support active travel initiatives that encourage and support people to walk and cycle to work or school and for pleasure?
- What role should government play in the development of community sports?
- How do we strike the balance between community sport and elite development?
- How do we make sure that sports and leisure facilities are accessible by all sections of our diverse communities?
- How do we encourage girls and young women into sport?
- How can we utilise our public services to encourage all ages to access sport and leisure provision?
- Are there innovative ways of providing funding for sports?