



Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands

Gordon Macdonald MSP

May 2024 Newsletter

Boosting Housing Supply in Edinburgh



Efforts to boost affordable housing supply by acquiring properties to bring into use for affordable housing and help reduce homelessness will be given an £80 million uplift over the next two years. The funding, announced by First Minister Humza Yousaf, will increase the Affordable Housing Supply Programme budget to nearly £600 million in 2024-2025.

Investment will help reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation, including by children, and will also accelerate discussions with COSLA in relation to the number of local authority void properties.

Gordon said "Empty properties provide a fantastic opportunity to alleviate issues of housing supply with a far quicker turnaround than building from scratch.

"While some properties are required to be used for temporary accommodation and others are being refurbished it is still a surprise to find there are over 9,000 empty council houses across Scotland.

"The SNP is already taking action - for example in Glasgow where more than 1700 homes have been brought back into use - but it's on politicians of all colours to explore what more can be done to increase the housing supply to tackle homelessness.

"I call on Edinburgh's Labour administration to address the 1200 empty homes in the city and to replicate the SNP's leadership and tackle this issue head-on, for my constituents and those across the city in desperate need of housing."

Sascha MacLeod To Retire After 20 Years With BIG Project Check Your Tax Code!



Sascha Macleod, Director of The BIG Project, retired last month after 20 years of hard work.

Sascha started out in teaching before focusing her career in the voluntary youth work sector. In 2022 she won the lifetime achievement award in recognition of her hard work and dedication over 42 years at the National Youth Work Awards.

Gordon said "Sascha was a founding member of The BIG Project. The Broomhouse-based project has contributed hugely to improving the lives of local children and young people for over 20 years.

"They are recognised as the go-to organisation in Broomhouse for children and young peoples' services and her contribution has created a legacy which will improve the lives of children and young people growing up in the area for years to come."



HM Revenue & Customs

From Saturday (6 April 2024) a new Advanced income tax band will apply a 45% rate on annual income between £75,000 - £125,140.

An additional 1p will be added to the Top rate of tax meaning income over £125,140 will be taxed at 48%.

Scottish taxpayers are being encouraged to check to ensure the tax code on their first payslip in the new financial year is accurate. People paying Scottish income tax should have a tax code that begins with an 'S'.

£300m Paid To Help Households With Energy Bills



The Scottish Government

Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Inter Heating Payment supports households on low incomes, including older people, disabled people and families with children under five. Child Winter Heating Payment helps families of the most severely disabled children and young people.

Edinburgh households received £2,003,500 of benefits in 2023/24, an increase from the £1,711,500 in payments made the previous winter.

Gordon said "I welcome the Scottish Government's increased support to tackle increased energy bills.

"I urge anyone who is struggling with the cost-of-living to visit the Scottish Government's [Cost of Living website](#)."

People in Scotland have received more than £30 million via two Scottish Government benefits to help them deal with increased energy costs this winter.

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Community Champion Retires



Betty Milton, chairperson of the Sighthill, Broomhouse and Parkhead Community Council for the last 16 years, is to retire this month.

Betty moved to Parkhead in Edinburgh during the Second World War and has lived in the area since. She contributed to numerous campaigns, championed the Older Persons Forum and participated in the Scottish Older Peoples Assembly.

Gordon said "I would like to thank Betty for her tireless work over the years. As a genuine pillar of the community I'm sure many will join me in wishing her all the best in her retirement".

Gordon submitted a parliamentary motion in recognition of Betty's achievements which you can read [here](#).

More Taxpayers Moving To Scotland



A new study shows that thousands more taxpayers moved to Scotland than left each year after Scottish Income Tax was introduced.

The research showed that on average net migration from within the UK has risen steadily since the tax was launched in 2017-18, with an average of 4,200 more taxpayers moving to Scotland than leaving every year from 2017-18 to 2021-22. In 2021-22 alone £200 million in additional taxable income was brought into Scotland.

Gordon said "I welcome this research which confirms what we already knew - that Scotland is an attractive place to live and work with a progressive approach to taxation that raises additional funds for public services.

"However, it is only with independence that Scotland can be free from the damage inflicted on our economy by austerity and the disastrous impact of Brexit."



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

All Scottish social security benefits increased by 6.7% in April, providing more

support for disabled people, unpaid carers and people on low incomes.

Scottish Child Payment, which helps the families of more than 327,000 children, is now worth £26.70 per child per week. A person eligible for the highest rate of Adult Disability Payment will receive £184.30 per week. Carer Support Payment, Scotland's newest benefit, has gone up to £81.90 every four weeks. The benefit for unpaid carers launched in three local authorities last year and will be available across Scotland by Autumn 2024.

Gordon said "I welcome the increased support for those in need. This investment in social security helps low income families with their living costs, enables disabled people to live full and independent lives, and supports older people to heat their homes in winter."

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Gordon holds open weekly surgeries for constituents every Friday at 10am.

The locations for these can be found at: <https://www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info/surgery>