

# Gordon Macdonald MSP

March 2025 Newsletter



## Budget Bill Passed In Parliament



The 2025-26 Scottish Budget has been approved by Parliament, including £21.7 billion for health & social care and more than £15 billion for local councils, alongside social security measures supporting an estimated two million people.

The Budget invests £21.7 billion in health and social care services, including almost £200 million to cut waiting times and help reduce delayed discharge, £6.9 billion in social security, £4.9 billion in climate-positive investment, more than £7 billion for infrastructure, more than £2 billion for colleges, universities and the wider skills system, and an additional £25 million to support the Grangemouth Industrial Cluster, taking total investment to almost £90 million.

Finance Secretary Shona Robison said "I am pleased that Parliament has approved the Scottish Government's Budget – confirming plans to invest in public services, lift children out of poverty, act in the face of the climate emergency and support jobs and economic growth.

"This is a Budget by Scotland for Scotland. It includes record NHS investment, social security spending to put money in the pockets of low income families and action to effectively scrap the two-child benefit cap next year. We are delivering a universal winter heating payment for the elderly, providing record funding for local government and increasing investment in affordable housing.

Gordon said "This budget is an ambitious programme of policies for social justice at a time when such ambition is most needed. I applaud my colleagues in government for producing the initial budget and then negotiating with others to ensure cross-party support to allow the bill to pass, with Labour and the Conservatives being the only parties to disappointingly fail to vote in favour."

## Dreghorn Tenants Served Eviction Notices



Tenants of MoD-owned properties in the Dreghorn area have received letters outlining the plans to sell 38 properties.

The MoD wrote to all the tenants in November 2024 to reassure them that, although the properties were to be sold, they would not be required to vacate their

homes before the summer of 2025. It explained that it was required to sell the houses under Treasury guidelines

Gordon said "I have been contacted by many constituents who have relayed their understandable concerns that they may have to leave their properties. Many have lived in the area for many years and their families are well-settled; having to leave the properties would cause considerable distress as well as forcing them to become homeless during a housing emergency.

"I have therefore contacted the Scottish Government and Edinburgh Council to ask for their consideration of using the Affordable Housing Supply Programme Funding to allow Edinburgh Council to purchase the properties with the current tenants then becoming tenants of Edinburgh Council."

## Redhall Walled Garden Visit



Gordon enjoyed a visit to Redhall Walled Garden where he met staff from Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAMH) to discuss their important work.

Redhall Walled Garden is an unusual 18th century walled garden on the west side of Edinburgh in the beautiful Colinton Dell.

Managed by SAMH staff, Redhall Walled Garden is run on organic principles and is an exciting and innovative community garden with many unusual features. It is an active working garden managed collaboratively by a team of 50 people recovering from the challenges of mental health problems.

Gordon said "I thank the staff for inviting me and encourage others to attend on Open Days and provide support."





## Private Finance Initiative Debate



On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February Gordon spoke in a debate on the ongoing impact of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) on Scotland's public finances.

Gordon spoke of the impact of PFI construction projects in Edinburgh and for the constituents of Edinburgh Pentlands, first highlighting the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary which cost around £184 million to build initially but estimates suggest the final cost could exceed £1.1 billion by the contract conclusion in 2027.

Gordon also raised the problems in refurbishment of Edinburgh schools under Labour's PFI, saying "In January 2016 during a storm, nine tonnes of masonry fell at PFI funded Oxbgangs Primary School in my constituency. Fortunately, no pupils or teachers were injured. This resulted in ten primaries, five secondaries and two additional support needs schools being closed impacting on the education of around 7,600 pupils because of concerns over the standard of construction across the city.

No wonder it was reported that in 2018 the former chairman of RBS, Sir Howard Davies, made an admission on BBC1's Question Time when he stated that PFI had been a "fraud on the people".

## New Funding To Tackle Gender Based Violence

Gordon welcomes the Scottish Government announcement that more than 100 organisations across Scotland working to tackle violence against women and girls will share in a funding uplift of £2.4 million.



The funding boost will bring the total Scottish Government investment in Delivering Equally Safe, which funds projects to prevent violence and support survivors, up to £21.6 million for the year ahead subject to the 2025-26 Budget being approved.

Gordon said "Grassroots organisations across Edinburgh Pentlands are at the heart of tackling violence against women and girls. This funding boost will support these organisations, will help prevent abuse occurring and ensure that women and girls who have experienced violence can continue to access the support they deserve."

## Pledge On Waiting Times Exceeded



The pledge to carry out 64,000 surgeries and procedures with additional funding by the end of March 2025 has been exceeded, new figures released to Parliament reveal.

More than 75,500 NHS surgeries and procedures were delivered between April 2024 the end of January 2025, around 11,500 more than pledged. Funded through £30 million investment, the targeted activity has resulted in significant reductions in inpatient waiting lists across several health board areas and specialities.

The Scottish Government will continue to monitor the impact of the funding until the end of March 2025 with boards reporting they expect to see further progress.

Health Secretary Neil Gray said "I am pleased to see health boards are now reporting the tangible impacts of our investment to clear the longest waits. Our plan is delivering and we are seeing progress across a number of speciality areas. I thank staff for their outstanding effort in carrying out this additional activity which is having a positive impact on people's lives."

## Wester Hailes BoS and Post Office Closures

Last month Gordon raised serious concerns regarding the upcoming closure of the Bank of Scotland branch in Wester Hailes.



Lloyds Banking Group announced that they are closing their Wester Hailes branch on 27 May 2025. This followed the announcement in December when Post Office Ltd announced that they were considering closure of the Wester Hailes post office.

Gordon contacted Post Office Ltd urging them and the UK Government, who own the Post Office network, to reconsider this proposal based on the needs of the local community.

Gordon has made further representation to Post Office Ltd to ask that it is taken into consideration that the Bank Of Scotland closure will mean local residents will lose access to cash and other services. Post Office Ltd have confirmed that access to cash will be a factor in their decision making process, which is due to conclude in late March.

## Contact Gordon Macdonald MSP

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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>

