



Scotland  
National Day Nurseries Association

# Scottish Elections 2026 party manifesto pledges reference guide

**The Best Start for  
Scotland's Children**

#WhereTheBestStartHappens

[ndna.org.uk/ScotlandManifesto](https://ndna.org.uk/ScotlandManifesto)



# Funded early learning and childcare



Expanding funded childcare from 9 months - modelled on 1140, to support working parents.

Scrap Curriculum for Excellence to replace with Curriculum for Aspiration.

Implement a proper funding model, giving parents a real say in where they take their child for childcare.



Roll out 1140 to all two-year-olds as soon as possible.

Provide 570 hours of funded childcare to all children from 6 months to 2 years old by end of 2031.

Funding for under-tuos could be used to pay for childcare in a nursery, or subsidise the income of a parent who chooses to stay at home or reduce their work hours.

Reform the way childcare funding is distributed to local councils, with the allocation following the child regardless of their home address, and ending the practice of councils denying places to children who live in neighbouring areas.

Provide base funding for childcare provision in remote and rural areas, to ensure nurseries and childminders are viable in areas with low populations.



Boost Tax-Free Childcare, for every £80 parents pay in they would get £20 from the UK government and £10 from the Scottish government.

Improve the flexibility of the childcare system, with funding following the child.

Support for childminders.

Action to ensure care is accessible for single parent families, parents who work shifts, and children with additional support needs.



Prioritise working families in the extension of ELC as funding allows, starting by shifting the 1140 funded hours to start on a child's third birthday.

Bring local authorities together in agreement to ensure that parents who live in one council area but work in another can choose where their child attends nursery.

Introduce a new support package for childminders in rural and remote areas.

Increase take-up of ELC among eligible two-year-olds.

Introduce fairer rates for private, voluntary and independent providers to cover the actual costs of delivering high-quality ELC.



No specific policy mention of childcare or ELC in the manifesto.

Give local authorities more control, de-centralising public services so they can be demand led in local communities.

Abolish Education Scotland and reinstate Holyrood control over Scottish education.



Invest another £500m into a brand-new childcare system that fits around families, year round childcare from 9 months to 12 years.

The new system will give support 52 weeks a year and mean families benefit from between £1,400 up to over £11,000 dependent on need.



# Other support for parents and families



Support breakfast clubs for all primary school children from April 2027.  
 Deliver on The Promise by 2030.  
 ASN diagnosis pathways to be redeveloped.  
 Full national review of the presumption to mainstreaming.  
 Introduce a two-child limit on Scottish Child Payment to encourage parents to work.  
 Restrict eligibility criteria for discretionary housing payments.



Increase the Scottish Child Payment (SCP) to £40, at with the aim of at least £55 by 2030, and offer supplements to the poorest families.  
 Increase SCP for young parents.  
 Increase all Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods, and expand the range of items that can be purchased with these.  
 Ensure all devolved social security payments increase annually, at least in-line with rising costs.  
 Offer additional childcare vouchers through the baby box scheme, to help with the cost of extra childcare in the early weeks and months.  
 Raise the school starting age and introduce a play-based kindergarten stage for three to six-year-olds, led by qualified kindergarten teachers.



Two weeks of fully funded holiday clubs for working parents of primary school children.  
 Create Family Network hubs in primary schools, based on Sure Start principles.  
 Establish a Parent Works Scheme, funding colleges to deliver dedicated training and employment support for parents who are unemployed or in low paid work.  
 Tackling school meal debt.



Focus on play-based learning until the age of 7, starting this longer statutory early years phase as voluntary pilots.  
 Recruiting more expert staff, including specialist behaviour support, ASN teachers, speech and language therapists, and educational psychologists.  
 End long waits for diagnosis, support and adjustments for people with neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD and autism.  
 Support Liberal Democrat proposals to give parents genuine flexibility and choice in the crucial early months by doubling Statutory Maternity and Shared Parental Pay.  
 Introduce family support hubs for families to immediately access a wide variety of stigma-free support, both online and over the phone.



Establish an Adult Re-Skilling Taskforce focussed on life-long learning and especially helping out-of-work adults into meaningful jobs in our 10 clusters of excellence.  
 ASN provision will be reformed.



Provide a £40 Child Payment to the least well-off parents of newborns for their crucial first year of life to help keep children out of poverty.





# Workforce and training



Support apprenticeships by ensuring all revenue raised by Apprenticeship Levy goes towards supporting a new demand-led apprenticeship model.

Boost college funding.

Introduce a Skills Bill to address skills gap, establishing formal relationships between businesses and higher education establishments.

Significantly invest in the early learning and childcare workforce, ensuring government funding requires and enables the payment of the real living wage to all staff.

Introduce collective bargaining in the early learning and childcare workforce, to deliver better terms and conditions.

Create a structured pathway for early learning and childcare practitioners to gain skills and expertise, leading to better pay over time.

Ringfence Scotland's share of Apprenticeship Levy funding for skills development.

Embed training and workforce development into public procurement contracts, incentivising businesses to upskill their workforces and driving training options for people across the country.

Reorganise apprenticeship funding to address the financial cliff edges that deter training providers and employers from taking on apprentices in their early 20s and older.

Include ELC in the new skills strategy: mapping where the gaps are and will be, and fitting training and education systems around it.

Reboot the Apprenticeship Levy funding model and ensure that every penny is invested into apprenticeships and linked to colleges.

Introduce an Apprenticeship Accelerator Grant, backed by the Apprenticeship Levy.

# Business and regulation



Permanently reduce taxes for businesses by lowering business rates and restructuring the system to end cliff-edge rises.



Disqualify companies from receiving tax reliefs if they are found to be in breach of minimum wage laws, or fined for environmental offences.



Work with the business sector and local authorities to develop our local business levy as a replacement for current unfair business rates.



Reform business rates



Phase out Land and Buildings Transaction Tax and reform Non-Domestic Rates (known as business rates) to create Annual Property Tax.



We will ensure that our non-domestic rates system aligns with Scotland's economic ambitions, while protecting the Small Business Bonus, which supports more than 100,000 small businesses.



National Day Nurseries Association is the national charity representing children's nurseries across the UK. At NDNA we don't just provide nursery membership, lobby government and offer training, we are dedicated to making a difference. Get involved:

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