

Pre-election monitoring: Scottish Conservatives' proposals

"A principled, practical Scottish alternative to the SNP" – Ruth Davidson, 5 Jan 2016

Political

- Ambition of overtaking Labour to become official opposition in Holyrood: *"...if the electorate doesn't change the government in May, they should consider changing the official opposition. And the Scottish Conservatives are ready to serve."* - Ruth Davidson, 5 Jan 2016
- Intend to hold SNP to 'guarantee' of no second referendum for a generation.
- [On new tax powers] *"We will also be able soon to draw on the findings of the Independent Commission on Fair and Competitive Taxation, headed by Sir Iain McMillan, on how we best use the huge new powers coming to [Holyrood]. It will...be a great debate, and one I relish."* – Ruth Davidson, 5 Jan 2016
- Publicly opposed UKG's decision to cut tax credits (prior to its reversal).
"It's not acceptable. The aim is sound, but we can't have people suffering on the way...the [UK] Government need to look again at it." – Ruth Davidson, October 2015

Policy

Education / schools

- *'The Gold Standard – a world class education for every child'*, published 5 Jan 16
 - Parental choice and diversity in school system
 - 'Parent Power Bill' – parents to set up own state schools; extend Jordanhill School model, ie outside of local authority control
 - Increase autonomy for schools
 - Individual schools with more control over budgets and recruitment
 - Introduce 'clusters' – single management tier, seamless pupil journey
 - Attainment Challenge funding direct to schools with high proportion of children from socially deprived backgrounds
 - Focus on literacy and numeracy
 - Introduce government target for pupils' reading ability
 - Increase teacher time on literacy and numeracy
 - 'FM reading challenge' – prizes for pupils reading books
 - Greater transparency
 - Re-establish independent inspectorate outwith Education Scotland
 - More international comparison tests
 - Increase research on 'what works'

Skills / Employability

- 10 new Skills Academies by 2020 – training for young people in areas of skills shortages (they specifically cited IT, engineering and construction)
- 10,000 new apprenticeships by 2020 – for industry to identify needs
- Reverse cuts to further education colleges – extra £60m paid for by a contribution from University graduates (no further detail at this stage)

Housing

- Reverse SG decision to cut funding for Help to Buy scheme from £130m to £65m

Health

- An extra 1000 nurses paid for by prescription contributions by "those who can afford it" (no further detail at this stage)

