WORKERS’ MANIFESTO

My over-riding mission is to abolish poverty. That means the reinstatement of full and fulfilling employment as a goal of public policy. It means we need to invest in our people, our communities, industries and public services and sharing the wealth of our country more equally.

The people, who create our country’s wealth, should have a fairer share of the wealth they create. They should also be given the opportunity to own the wealth they create if, for example, the company they work for is to be closed or sold-off.

Official figures suggest unemployment is just 3.8% but scratch beneath the surface and we see underemployment is endemic, and work is all too often insecure and low paid. In-work figures show large numbers of part-time workers, those with non-permanent jobs, record numbers of people on zero-hours contracts or in agency work, and the, often bogus, self-employed.

In-work wages are too low with nearly half a million people in Scotland earning less than the living wage, meaning too many people do not have the means to lead fulfilling and happy lives. And we know that there is a profound gender inequality at the heart of this with twice as many women as men earning less than the living wage.

According to the Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland today 70% of our children who are considered poor live in households where at least one parent is working; once again we need to ensure that work is the pathway out of poverty.

This is simply unacceptable in a country that is one of the wealthiest in the world.

People in Scotland are desperate for hope. They are desperate to be treated better and more fairly at work. They are also seeking a more equitable economy and society. People want to liberate themselves from feeling powerless in their workplaces. They want unfairness, poverty and inequality tackled. They want an economy that works for the many, and not just a privileged few at the top.

They want a radical change to the unequal society in which the richest 1% in Scotland own more personal wealth than the whole of the bottom 50% put together. This is quite simply wrong: our country’s wealth must be more equally shared.

From day one of my leadership, I will make sure there is real and radical change that challenges an economic orthodoxy, which has undermined and weakened organised labour, reduced wages and security at work.

The Scottish Government is not making the most of its £11 billion of purchasing power. I shall constantly challenge the SNP to make full use of procurement to improve workers’ pay and
conditions. Public sector contractors’ corporate social responsibility statements need to be more than a tick box exercise.

Political pressure is needed to create real and sustained change with respect to procurement. This political pressure can be utilised to future-proof Scotland for an increasingly automated world. It can be used to address glaring imbalances caused by occupational segregation. One clear example is the need to properly value and properly reward those, predominantly women workers, caring for the vulnerable.

A social conscience is needed at the heart of procurement; I will challenge the SNP on this and expose their empty excuses when they say they cannot use procurement to drive up standards because of EU rules. Flexible workplace rule have been lauded by some but a flexible workforce means far too many workers suffer perpetual insecurity at work with all the uncertainty that this brings to their lives and families. Using procurement, the Scottish Government must seek to make work more secure, pay the living wage and address occupational segregation.

I want greater rights for working people and will always encourage much greater equality in the workplace whilst also tackling insecurity at work and improvements in the pay and conditions of working people. I will work with the Labour team at Westminster to achieve this, whilst at the same I will seek to use the powers of the Scottish Parliament to make the lives of working people better. History shows us that it has always been the Labour Party working with the trade unions and wider Labour movement that has always delivered progress for working people.

It is that alliance of our industrial and political wings that will once again transform the lives of working people through greater rights and protection at work. A more equal distribution of wealth and power in our country and the creation of new, better paid and more secure employment through a massive investment in housing and other infrastructure and in our industries.

When Scottish Labour leader and then First Minister I pledge to:

- Make Full Employment a central goal of public policy once more
- Have a values-led public procurement strategy, which only awards public contracts to organisations that meet minimum standards with respect to corporate social responsibility. These standards include no zero-hour contracts; no blacklisters; commitments to create quality apprenticeships; to tackle occupational segregation; recognise trade unions; assess pay ratios of the average worker and senior management; and are fair tax mark accredited businesses
- Tackle the gender pay gap by transforming the gender composition and addressing the imbalances in occupational segregation through the true value of the 5 Cs: caring, cleaning, catering, clerical and cashiering
- Create tens of thousands of good quality, trade union jobs through a massive social house-building programme and ensure that gender segregation is addressed via procurement by setting targets for contractors, as well as creating apprenticeships
- Give workers a statutory right to own their own workplace on a cooperative basis and so own the wealth that they themselves create when/if the company they work for is being sold-off or closed-down
• Introduce the Unison Ethical Care Charter and make sure staff in the care sector are valued in the way they should be with good pay, fair terms and conditions and with pathways for professional development
• Transform Scotland into an inclusive, environmentally-sustainable investment-led economy that plans for full employment in an increasingly automated future
• Defend and increase collective bargaining and sectoral bargaining processes in Scotland
• Review pay ratios in the public sector as well as through procurement to ensure the same applies to companies bidding for public contracts, with a view to reducing pay differentials between workers and senior management
• Implement the Scottish Labour commitment to ban unpaid internships and training places, which provide an unfair advantage to those who can afford to work without pay.
• Support the Unite the Union Hospitality Workers Charter
• Give the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority the same powers to arrest in Scotland as in the rest of the UK

Healthier, safer workplaces

• In light of Brexit we need to review the funding and operation of the Health & Safety Executive and consider the case for a Scottish HSE
• Whatever the formation of a future HSE I will promote a right of workplace access and inspection for trade union health & safety representatives, especially in those particularly dangerous industries such as oil & gas, agriculture and construction
• I will change the 2007 Corporate Homicide Act and deliver legislation that gives the families of victims a genuine possibility of justice through prosecutions ensuring that the law serves as a deterrent to corner cutting and risky practices from employers
• I will change Fatal Accident Inquiries (FAIs). The current FAI system is outdated and does not support nor engage with families at a time when they need to be heard and they need justice. I am committed to an FAI process which responds quicker to help bring justice to families and friends of workers involved in fatal accidents.
• In light of Brexit we need to reconsider the long standing UK opt out of the 48 hour working week provisions of the working time regulations, any reduction in hours must be planned and guarantee the protection of earnings

Equality, Representation and Justice

• I will ensure that women and diverse communities are fairly represented on Scotland’s public boards and in other public appointments.
• I will work with groups such as the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights to further their excellent work to eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial justice across Scotland.
• Union membership among the BAME community is consistently lower in Scotland than other parts of the UK – I will fight to ensure better trade union access in workplaces.
• I will establish a review looking into the often under-reported conditions BAME workers face in Scotland - this work would be in partnership with wider organisations, such as STUC.
• I will work with national and local disability organisations to ensure better access into work, training and apprenticeships - with an aim to improving the employment rate for adults classified as disabled under the Equality Act was which currently stands at 42.9% compared to 80.1% not classified as disabled.
• I will work to rebalance the gender gap via quotas in educational institutions.
• I will work to rebalance the gender gaps through targeted use of quotas in modern apprenticeships where there is a high level of occupational segregation such as in social care and construction.
• I will end the scourge of zero hours contracts and insecure work that has also disproportionately affected the BAME community.
• I will work to ensure justice sought for workers who have experienced discrimination, whether that is women waiting on the settlement of historical equal pay claims, former miners or blacklisted construction workers.

I will support and work alongside the Labour team at Westminster and together we will:

• Introduce a real living wage of £10 for all – benefitting nearly half a million Scottish workers
• Abolish zero hours contracts, benefitting 60,000 people in Scotland
• Repeal the Trade Union Act and roll out sectoral collective bargaining – because the most effective way to maintain good rights at work is collectively through a union
• Guarantee trade unions a right to access workplaces – so that trade unions can speak to members and potential members
• End the public sector pay cap – because public sector workers deserve a pay rise after years of falling wages
• Double paid paternity leave to four weeks and increase paternity pay – because fathers are parents too and deserve to spend more time with their new babies
• Strengthen protections for women against unfair redundancy – because no one should be penalised for having children