

Full text of Kezia Dugdale's resignation letter

Linda Stewart
Chair,
Scottish Labour Party
290 Bath Street
G2 4RE

Dear Linda,

As Chair of the party, I am writing to you today to resign as Leader of the Scottish Labour Party.

It has been an honour and a privilege to have served this party in a leadership position for the last two and a half years, covering four national elections and one referendum.

I have worked with many great people, not least the staff in our HQ led by Brian Roy and those in the Scottish Parliament, whose boundless energy, expertise and good humour has guided our party through some dark hours and difficult times.

I'd like to thank my shadow cabinet for their efforts, and in particular Iain Gray for his unflinching love and support and to James Kelly for the thankless but crucial job he does so well as our Business Manager.

Earlier this year I lost a dear friend who taught me a lot about how to live. His terminal illness forced him to identify what he really wanted from life, how to make the most of it and how to make a difference. He taught me how precious and short life was and never to waste a moment.

Being leader has always been a difficult but fulfilling challenge. One that until now I have enjoyed, driven by a clear guiding purpose and goals, many of which I have achieved.

I am proud of the fact that I've demonstrated how the parliament's powers can be used to stop austerity with progressive taxes and the creation of new benefits. Proud to have advanced the call for federalism across the UK. Proud to have delivered real autonomy for the Scottish Labour Party and a guaranteed voice for Scotland and Wales on the NEC.

Educational inequality is the number one issue in Scottish politics after the constitution because Scottish Labour under my leadership put it there.

I am proud to have delivered 50/50 slates of amazing and diverse candidates in both the Scottish and U.K. Elections and equally proud to have invested in the next generation of Labour activists and parliamentarians with leadership programmes.

These have already furnished us with two of our magnificent seven MPs. With that re-established Scottish Labour group at Westminster, and a talented and effective group in Holyrood, Scottish Labour has a bright future.

A marker of success for me was to leave as leader with the party in better shape than I found it and I have done that.

Emerging from the challenging times following the 2014 referendum, and the 2015 UK election, we now have a solid platform on which to build towards success, and government.

I have given the task of achieving this all that I have. But with nearly four years now until the next Scottish Parliament elections, I am convinced that the party needs a new leader with fresh energy, drive and a new mandate to take the party into that contest.

I will continue as a Labour MSP for the Lothian Region and I am already looking forward to spending more time with constituents and on constituency issues.

Too often our leaders leave in a crisis, with scores to settle. I love this party too much for that to be my way. There will be no press conference and no off the record briefing in my name. I choose to stand down because I believe it is best for me and best for Scottish Labour, at a time when we can be positive and optimistic about our future.

I remain in awe of all those party activists who devote their time to this movement without pay or reward. I thank them for their belief in me.

Yours in solidarity,

Kez Dugdale

It's time for a 50p top rate of tax

28 August 2017



Working poverty is now at its highest point since devolution.

It has increased by 150,000 households since the SNP came to power in 2007 and is now at 420,000 in Scotland.

It is time to use the powers of the Parliament to take action.

Our research has shown the number of people who pay the top rate of tax has increased by 91 per cent since 2010-11, at the same time as the increase in

working poverty.

A radical, Labour Scottish government would make Scotland a better place to live, work, grow up and grow old in by using the powers of the Scottish Parliament to tax the richest and invest.

That's why we would introduce a 50p top rate of tax for people earning over £150,000 a year.

What hasn't the Scottish Parliament introduced the 50p rate if it has the powers?

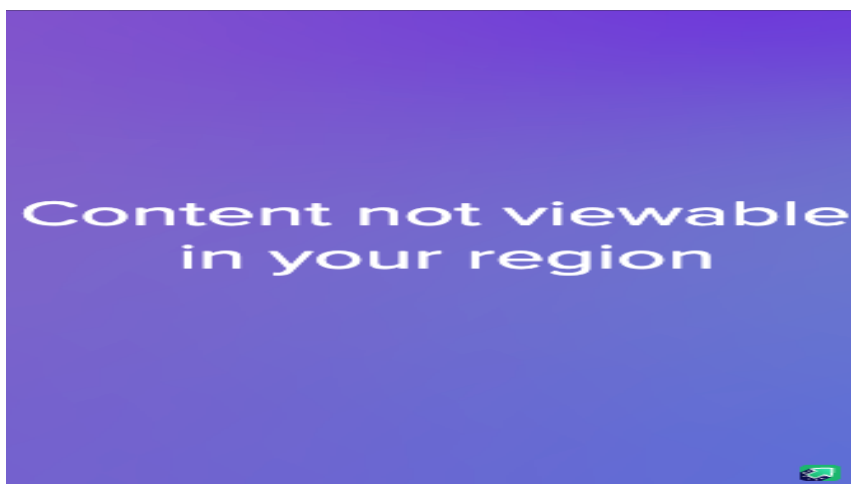
The SNP flip-flops on their position on increasing the top rate tax at almost every election. The Nationalists say they support a 50p top rate of tax across the UK, but won't use the powers of the Scottish Parliament to implement it here in Scotland.

In fact, the SNP has voted against the 50p rate of tax in the Scottish Parliament eight times.

Labour would use the powers of the Parliament to build a Scotland that works for the many, not the few.

Scottish Labour's summer campaign, For The Many, is this week focused on using the powers of the Scottish Parliament to make Scotland a better place to live, work, grow up and grow old in.

To read more about our summer campaign, click the image below.



[Scotland holds the keys to delivering a Labour government](#)

22 August 2017

Writing in the Daily Record ahead of the Jeremy Corbyn's summer campaign tour, Kezia Dugdale says only Labour can deliver the radical change Scots want

Since the General Election the Labour party has been on a campaign footing, ready to fight another election whenever it is called.

This week, Jeremy Corbyn is coming to Scotland to campaign. Unlike Theresa May, this won't be stage managed flying visit – Jeremy will be here for five days making the case for a Labour government across Scotland – from the Western Isles to Fife, via Glasgow and Lanarkshire.

It's now clear that Scotland holds the keys to delivering a UK Labour government and getting the Tories out.

In June our pro-UK, anti-austerity message slashed majorities in seats that the SNP thought were safe for decades.

That's because Labour is offering the real radical change that Scots want.

A UK Labour government would transform Britain for the better, ending the failed experiment of austerity and stimulating our economy with billions of pounds of investment that would protect public services and create jobs.

Scotland alone would see £3 billion more for our schools and hospitals, and a £20 billion Scottish Investment Bank to create jobs across the country.

As I campaigned in the General Election, one policy that really cut through was a £10 an hour minimum wage by 2020.

In Scotland alone that would benefit almost half a million working people – including 130,000 young people under the age of 24.

That's the kind of bold a radical change you will get with a Labour government.

In Scotland, we have been running a summer campaign based on the positive changes we would make through the Scottish Parliament.

Labour MSPs have produced a raft of Member's Bills ready to change the law on a range of issues from ending period poverty, to banning fracking, to repealing the SNP's controversial Football Act legislation.

We are tackling the big changes we are seeing in our economy and our public services with an industrial strategy to create decent work and a health and social care commission to consider what support our health service needs in the 21st century.

There is a sense of energy to the Labour family that people can feel across the country right now. They know that radical change, which felt so far away for so long, is now within touching distance.

After seven years in office the Tories are an absolute shambles, more interested in fighting each other than fighting for working people. Our country faces huge challenges as a result of Brexit but the Tories are more concerned with a plotting who will replace Theresa May than charting a better course for the UK.

In Edinburgh the SNP government looks like a party that has been in power for a decade – out of fresh ideas and squabbling amongst themselves. Ten years of talking left and walking right has finally caught up with them.

These are two parties blinded by their own nationalism to make to deliver the change Scotland needs.

Only a Labour government –at Westminster and Holyrood – can deliver a country for the many, not the few.

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This article first appeared in the Daily Record on Tuesday 22 August 2017

[Labour will transform Scotland – Corbyn](#)

By UK Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn

Scotland is a great country, but its people are being held back. Too many are barely getting by, without the chance to live their lives to the full, while an elite few across Britain get richer and richer.

That's why I will be spending this week in Scotland, campaigning for real change. It's a place full of friends, a country I love with an inspiring working class history and a fantastic tradition of social progress, education and culture.

But Scotland has suffered as much as anywhere from the way our government and economy are run. Hope has been dashed by the cruelty of Tory cuts and failure, delivered via the austerity conveyor belt in Holyrood.

Labour's message in the General Election was that things don't have to be this way, and our manifesto put the disastrous growth of inequality centre stage.

We showed how we can ditch austerity, investing in the jobs and industries of the future, while ending tax giveaways to the rich and rebuilding our public services.

We can and must transform our society to give hope to everyone – for the many, not the few.

That message won widespread support in Scotland and across Britain. As a result, we have six excellent new Scottish Labour MPs and Labour is back on the road to recovery in Scotland.

But we know we have a lot of work to do in Scotland. My aim, and that of the whole Labour Party, is to listen to the hopes and aspirations of the Scottish people – and earn their confidence that the policies we are campaigning for are realistic, affordable and would transform their lives for the better. We need to win more seats in Scotland if we are going to form a Government that will make those policies a reality. With the Conservatives in complete disarray, propped up by Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, we are on a permanent campaign footing.

That's why I am spending this week in constituencies across Scotland. We must make a great advance at the next general election, whenever it comes.

I will be travelling from Govan to Stornoway in the Western Isles, which is now a Labour target seat. I will be setting out our message of hope and our plans to meet the aspirations of the Scottish people.

Labour has a fully-costed programme that will decisively improve the lives of millions of Scots. With no tax rises on 95% of earners, we will end austerity and properly fund our public services. The next Labour government would provide an extra £3 billion per year to the Scottish Government to spend how it saw fit.

We will offer hope to the workers who keep our public services running in the face of endless Tory cuts, with our pledge to lift the public sector pay cap and urging the Scottish Government to do the same.

We will protect pensioner incomes, by legislating to keep the Triple-Lock on state pensions, protecting the pensions of over 1 million Scottish pensioners, and guaranteeing them a basic income necessary to live a dignified life in retirement.

At the same time, we will act to end the national scandal of in-work poverty. The number of workers living in poverty is growing remorselessly under the Conservatives. We will introduce a Real Living Wage of £10 per hour by 2020, giving a pay rise to at least half a million Scots.

Scottish trade unions have always stood up for working people in Scotland, and the Labour Party – founded by the Scot Keir Hardie – cherishes our close relationship with unions and their members.

Trade unions have driven up wages and living standards for working people, improved health and safety in the workplace, and challenged prejudice and discrimination.

That's why the next Labour Government will repeal the Tories' vicious Trade Union Act which makes it harder for workers to organise together and defend their pay and conditions.

The UK economy is weak and hopelessly unbalanced. Living standards for most people are falling and investment in our economy is way behind our European counterparts.

We know that we need an investment-led economy, so we will provide Scotland with an additional £20 billion to invest in the jobs, skills, infrastructure and industries of the future.

The aspiration I have for Scotland and the whole of the UK is to build a country where each generation is better off, more secure, fulfilled and equal than the last.

There's no reason whatever why that isn't possible. But to achieve it we need to confront the powerful interests that benefit from a system which makes life for most people more difficult, poorer and more unstable.

Solidarity, coming together to work for the common interest, is part of the

lifeblood of Scottish culture. That's why I know that the Scottish people can transform this country. It is Labour's task to support them.

This article originally appeared in the Sunday Mail on August 20 2017.

Scottish schools can be the best in the world

19 August 2017



We think Scottish schools can be the best in the world. Here's our plan to do it.

- Use the powers of the Scottish Parliament to stop the cuts and invest in education
- An independent review of teachers' pay, conditions and career structure to re-establish the profession as world leading, and attract new teachers to it.
- A commitment to urgently commission the design of a systematic focused literacy and numeracy programme as recommended by the government's international advisers.
- Halt the centralisation of schools through regional directors and maintain local budgeting.
- Re-establish an independent inspectorate and immediately task the Chief Inspector with producing an improvement plan for curriculum for excellence, from primary one to sixth year of high school.
- An expert group to plan reform of the senior phase of school, increasing vocational strands for example through skills academies and Further Education partnerships.
- Introduce a Scottish Graduation Certificate for all at 18, reflecting achievement in exam, vocational, work experience and voluntary learning.

- Bursaries for teacher training in shortage subjects, beginning with Mathematics and Physics.
- Establish a Breakfast club in every school.
- Establish a Homelink worker and mental health counsellor in every secondary school cluster.
- End charging for exam appeals.

This week, our summer campaign 'For The Many' has been focused on education as the schools go back. Find out more about the campaign by clicking the image below:

