

Scottish Labour outlines plan to lift thousands of children out of poverty



Scottish Labour exists to improve the lives of people who struggle every day to make ends meet.

That's why this weekend we unveiled a policy that will take thousands of children out of poverty.

Our pledge is to use the new welfare powers of the Scottish Parliament to top-up child benefit. Our plan would see families £240 a year better off by 2021.

As Kezia Dugdale told Scottish Labour's conference this weekend: "Our plan would mean help for the majority of families across Scotland, and would mean 18,000 fewer children living in poverty in the first year, and up to 30,000 once these changes are fully implemented.

"It would mean starting to reverse the fall in the value of child benefit that families have seen over the past five years.

"And it would send a strong message, that Scotland will not allow hard working families to bear the brunt of Brexit."

Anti-poverty charities such as the Child Poverty Action Group have already backed Scottish Labour's support for the plan.

Their director, John Dickie, said the policy "would make all the difference to hard pressed families".

This policy is in the great tradition of our Labour Party.

Under the Blair and Brown governments, Labour lifted 120,000 children in Scotland out of poverty.

But after we lost power at Westminster in 2010, that progress was halted by a callous Tory government.

While David Cameron governed, with help from the LibDems, the proportion of children living in families below the poverty line reached one in five.

It is a national scandal that 220,000 children today across Scotland are living in poverty.

That is why this policy is so important and we will urge the SNP to include the plan in the Child Poverty Bill that is currently making its way through Holyrood.

If that is rejected, then Scottish Labour will find other parliamentary

mechanisms to bring the policy into effect.