

[SNP must review spending, say Scottish Conservatives](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
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The Scottish Conservatives have identified £210m efficiency savings that the Scottish Government could use to invest in public services, rather than the increases in income tax announced in the draft Budget.

The Scottish Government has now confirmed that everyone being paid more than £26,000 – including nurses, primary teachers and police officers – would pay more income tax under the new Scottish Budget than if they lived in the rest of the UK.

The SNP has introduced a new rate of 21p for those earning between £24,000 and £44,000. That means, once a worker hits £26,000, they will be worse off than their equivalents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland under these SNP plans.

It is estimated around 1.16 million workers will be hit by these changes, a total of 45 per cent.

The Federation of Small Businesses, Scottish Chambers of Commerce, the Scottish Retail Consortium and Business in Scotland have all warned the Scottish Government against raising taxes due to the negative effects on the economy.

Murdo Fraser, Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Finance said:

“Our spending analysis clearly shows where the Scottish Government can make substantial savings that could be ploughed back into public services; almost as much as can be raised by raising taxes on hardworking taxpayers.

“The Scottish Conservatives believe that hitting hardworking families with higher taxes will only damage the Scottish economy in the long run, leading to less money to fund public services.

“The Scottish Government should instead seek to tackle areas of inefficient spending or else these inefficiencies will continue to spiral and take up a larger amount of spending in future.

“There is now a serious consensus within Scotland’s business community that the SNP should not increase income tax.

“The SNP must stick to the manifesto; there is no need to raise taxes when there are clear savings to be made.”