

# “Under the Tories living standards are being squeezed and public services are being cut”

The Chancellor's Budget will impose further cuts on the public services we all value.

Philip Hammond claimed it was an upbeat Budget, but the reality is that by the end of this decade up to £1 billion will have been cut from the Scottish Parliament's funding. That means less money to spend on schools and hospitals.

## **Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale said:**

*“This was billed as a Budget that would be upbeat, but what we got instead was an insight into the devastating impact a chaotic Tory Brexit will have on families across the UK. Under the Tories living standards are being squeezed, debt is on the rise and public services are being cut.*

*“The Chancellor could have brought an end to seven years of damaging Tory austerity, but instead he doubled down by imposing cuts to public services and welfare. Despite the £350 million extra for the Scottish Government announced today, the reality is that by the end of this decade up to £1 billion will have been cut from Holyrood's budget – cuts the SNP chooses to meekly pass on to families here in Scotland.*

*“The fact that the Chancellor barely mentioned Brexit at all is a sign of the Tories' complacency. Brexit will not only damage our economy but it has also provided the Nationalists with the excuse they have been looking for to impose another destabilising independence referendum on the people of Scotland. The Tories cannot be trusted on the Union.”*

With major new tax and welfare powers being devolved to the Scottish Parliament, there is a chance to do things differently. For example, Labour has set out a plan to top up Child Benefit by £240 a year by 2020. This will lift 30,000 people out of poverty.

## **Kezia Dugdale added:**

*“We don't have to pass on Tory austerity. The SNP should stop using the Scottish Parliament as a conveyor belt for Tory austerity and back Labour's plan to stop the cuts and invest in valued local services like schools and social care.”*

One of the big mistakes of the Budget was the Chancellor's change to National Insurance. It means that self-employed workers – like tax drivers and plumbers – will face a National Insurance contributions hike. This breaks a Tory manifesto promise from 2015, where they said that National Insurance would not increase.

**Commenting on the National Insurance increase, Scottish Labour Westminster spokesman Ian Murray said:**

*“This is yet another broken manifesto promise from the Tories. At the General Election in 2015 the Tories made a very clear commitment not to increase National Insurance, yet today the Chancellor did exactly that.*

*“This Budget proves once and for all that ordinary working people just cannot trust the Tories. The Tories are increasing taxes on those who set up their own businesses and drive our economy while cutting taxes for big business.”*