

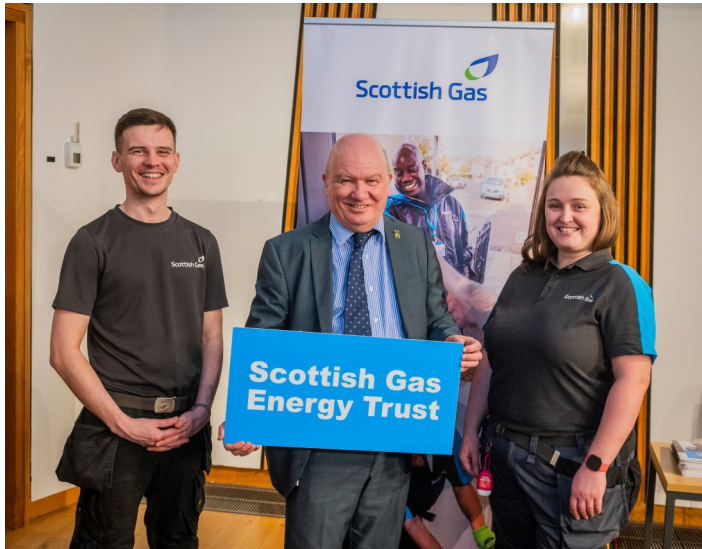


Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands

# Gordon Macdonald MSP

February 2024 Newsletter

## Scottish Gas Help and Support



As many struggle with the hangover of festive bills, Gordon is urging residents to check if they are entitled to additional support with household energy costs.

Changes to the energy price cap mean average bills have increased by 5%.

Gordon met with Scottish Gas to discuss the help and support available to households. The supplier has committed £100 million to help consumers since the start of the energy crisis. The *Individual and Families Fund* re-opened on 4<sup>th</sup> December and will expect to close at the end of March 2024 (unless expended sooner). The fund is available to British/Scottish Gas and non-British Gas customers with debt on a credit energy account or those on a pre-payment meter. You need to have energy debt up to £2,000 and have a credit energy account OR use a

Pre-Payment Meter. There is also the *British Gas Energy Support Fund* for British Gas customers.

Gordon said, "I want to make sure people know that there is support available to help them and I encourage anyone who is struggling with energy debt to apply."

Applications can be made at: <https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk>.

## Campaign to Improve Scottish Cancer Survival

## Police Station Review



Gordon is supporting the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce's (LSCT) Awareness Day 2024 to improve the poorer survival chances of people diagnosed with cancers of the lung, liver, brain, oesophagus, pancreas or stomach.

The LSCT has released figures, which show that the whole of the UK lags

behind other countries when it comes to patient survival.

The LSCT is calling for all UK governments to commit to increasing survival rates for less survivable cancers by improving existing diagnostic routes and developing new treatments by investing in research into less survivable cancers.

Gordon said, "I fully support the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce and their calls on Less Survivable Cancers Awareness Day to improve the currently terrible prospects for people diagnosed with these cancers."



Police Scotland have undertaken a review of their building estate to identify buildings that are no longer required. They are looking for your views on proposals to close Balerno Police Station. The consultation ends on 18 February. Follow the below link to have your say on its future.

<https://consult.scotland.police.uk/estates/2dc367ef>

## Libraries at Home



Gordon commented, "Edinburgh City Libraries provide a service to people who are unable to access a building based library."

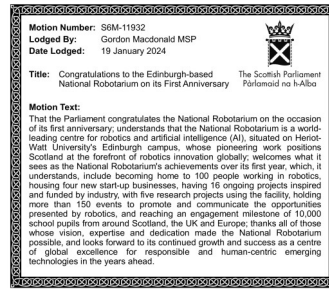
The various services include: -

- Mobile Library Service: Weekly service around some communities. Timetables available in libraries, website, or by phoning Access Services.
- Service to Western General and Liberton hospitals.
- Home Delivery Service by all community libraries.
- Library Link: accessible transport brings users to a library where they can choose their books personally.
- Monthly mobile service to care homes, sheltered housing and retirement flats.

Call the service on 0131 529 5683 or at: -

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/libraries)

## National Robotarium First Anniversary



Gordon lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament congratulating the National Robotarium on the occasion of its first anniversary.

The National Robotarium is a world-leading centre

for robotics and artificial intelligence (AI), situated on Heriot-Watt University's Edinburgh campus.

Gordon commented, "The pioneering work of the Robotarium has positioned Scotland at the forefront of robotics innovation globally. In its first year, it has become home to 100 people working in robotics and has produced four new start-up businesses."

The Robotarium has held more than 150 events to promote and communicate the opportunities presented by robotics, and has reached an engagement milestone of being visited by 10,000 school pupils from around Scotland, the UK and Europe.

## Continuing Rent Protection for Private Tenants



Regulations to protect tenants concerned about rent increases following the ending of the emergency rent cap have been laid in the Scottish Parliament. From 1 April, the process for rent

adjudication will temporarily be modified for one year.

Tenants who wish to dispute rent increases can apply for adjudication. Rent Service Scotland or the First-tier Tribunal will set rent on the lowest of the following: -

- The open market rate;
- The rent requested by the landlord; and,
- A comparator based on the difference between the market rate and current rent

Gordon commented, "Our legislation has led the way in the UK in capping rent increases and protecting tenants. We are committed to bringing in a long-term system of rent controls and creating new rights for tenants."

## Visitor Levy Passes First Stage



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

MSPs voted to endorse the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Bill, which will enable councils to apply a levy on overnight stays in line with many European tourist destinations. All money raised would be reinvested in tourism

facilities benefitting the local economy.

The proposals were backed in a Scotland-wide consultation. Representatives from the tourism industry, COSLA, the Scottish Government and other partners have formed an expert group to consider how the legislation could be best implemented if passed.

Gordon said, "A visitor levy can be a force for good, giving councils the power to use the proceeds to invest in the local economy, bringing benefits to residents and visitors alike. The Bill is also part of our objective to fiscally empower local government and strengthening local democracy, which are at the heart of this measure."

## Contact Gordon Macdonald MSP

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Gordon holds open weekly surgeries for constituents every Friday at 10am.

The locations for these can be found at: <https://www.gordonmacdonaldmsp.info/surgery>