

Greens urge action on child deaths and poverty

✘ Green MSP for Lothian Alison Johnstone is today urging Scottish Ministers to act on a report just published which claims that 400 child deaths each year are avoidable.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health have produced The State of Child Health report which demands that the Scottish Government must consider a 'child health in all policies' approach.

Its headline message is that one in five children in the UK lives in poverty and inequality is blighting their lives. Children's health in the UK is a major cause for concern and below par with the rest of Europe.

The report calls for lower speed limits such as the 20mph limit which we are rolling out in Edinburgh which would create safer areas for play and active travel. The report also claims that one in five P1 children in England, Scotland and Wales are overweight or obese leading to problems including Type 2 diabetes.

Alison Johnstone, Health spokesperson for the Scottish Greens and MSP for Lothian, said:

"The link between poverty and poor health is well established and this shocking report shows we need a transformation in how Government approaches the issue. Four hundred preventable child deaths each year must prompt serious action.

"Green MSPs have been pushing for an anti-poverty budget from Scottish Ministers, and we've already secured a guarantee that Glasgow's Healthier Wealthier Children project, which boosts incomes for vulnerable families, will be rolled out across Scotland. We need to see other interventions such as an

allowance for young carers, promotion of the Living Wage to stop in-work poverty, and a more humane approach to social security.

“We also need to see a shift in spending to make it easy to be active every day. The lack of funding for walking and cycling while motorways and air travel are set to benefit, and the deep cuts planned to sports agencies and council services, show that Scottish Ministers haven’t grasped how serious the situation is.”