

# Looking ahead and dealing with this year's challenges

Last year brought with it immense challenges to Edinburgh's residents, businesses, and community groups. As 2025 progresses, increased funding from Westminster offers hope for progress on local and national priorities.

Edinburgh's 2024 housing emergency exposed a deepening crisis. Families were forced into inadequate homes, and young people found housing increasingly out of reach. While reversing cuts to affordable housing and boosting homeless services are welcome steps, 2025 must deliver lasting solutions. Building affordable homes and reducing homelessness are essential to fostering a fairer, more equitable future.

NHS waiting lists surged alarmingly in 2024, with over 100,000 Scots waiting more than a year for treatment. With £1.72 billion in funding allocated to Scotland's NHS in 2025-26, this year is a critical opportunity to address systemic backlogs and improve local health services.

Scotland's drug deaths crisis has claimed over 6,000 lives since 2019 – a national tragedy. Strengthening resources for charities, health workers, and local authorities in 2025 is crucial. Recovery pathways must be clear, accessible, and adequately funded to save lives.

Child poverty continues to rise, affecting 260,000 children across Scotland. The 2025 budget must prioritise employability programs, expand support for vulnerable families, and implement bold income-boosting measures. Every child deserves a fair start, making this a pressing national priority.

Scotland's arts and culture sector, vital to its identity and economy, has faced persistent funding challenges. Increased 2025/26 funding offers relief, but long-term stability is needed to protect creative industries and nurture cultural growth.

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza deepened in 2024, with over 46,000 Palestinian deaths reported since October 2023. International organisations have called these atrocities genocide. This year we must advocate for peace, justice, and an end to this unbearable suffering.

Access to life-changing diabetes technology remains inequitable, with nearly 1,000 patients in NHS Lothian still waiting for tools like hybrid closed-loop systems. Despite government funding, 2025 must ensure all Scots living with Type 1 diabetes can lead healthier lives.

From housing to healthcare, addiction, poverty, and global humanitarian crises, these issues are deeply interconnected. Addressing them requires long-term investment, coordination, and compassion. In 2025, we have a chance to build communities where no one is left behind - a future defined by hope, dignity, and opportunity for all.



Foysoł with Sarah Boyack MSP and Michael Stott, Chair of Brunton Trust



Foyso with people who have Type 1 diabetes after the parliamentary debate