FOYSOL CHOUDHURY MSP

MEMBER OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT FOR LOTHIAN REGION

JANUARY UPDATE

NEW YEAR, NEW CHALLENGES

JANUARY 2025

As we all start the new year, my work in the Scottish Parliament has been incredibly busy. I started the year off by leading the first Member's Business of 2025 on the importance of access to diabetes technology. This debate marks a culmination of campaign work, roundtables at parliament, and lobbying from Lothian residents—all of whom I thank for their continued advocacy.

I also led a productive meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, MSPs, MPs, local councillors, and NHS Lothian to discuss what action we can currently take to help the residents of West Lothian get a new health centre. This meeting has led to increased cross-party and cross-governmental collaboration and agreement on the urgent need for a final business case for when capital funding becomes available.

DESPITE RECORD FUNDING FROM THE UK LABOUR GOVERNMENT, THE SNP GOVERNMENT'S NHS IS STILL FAILING

I welcome the recently announced Creative Scotland Multi-Year Funding. The increased funding reflects the push local organisations and advocates like myself, the Scottish Labour's Spokesperson for Culture, Europe, and International Development have made to the Scottish Government, demanding a real commitment to supporting Scotland's arts and culture.

Thank you for your continued support, and please continue reading for some of my recent work.

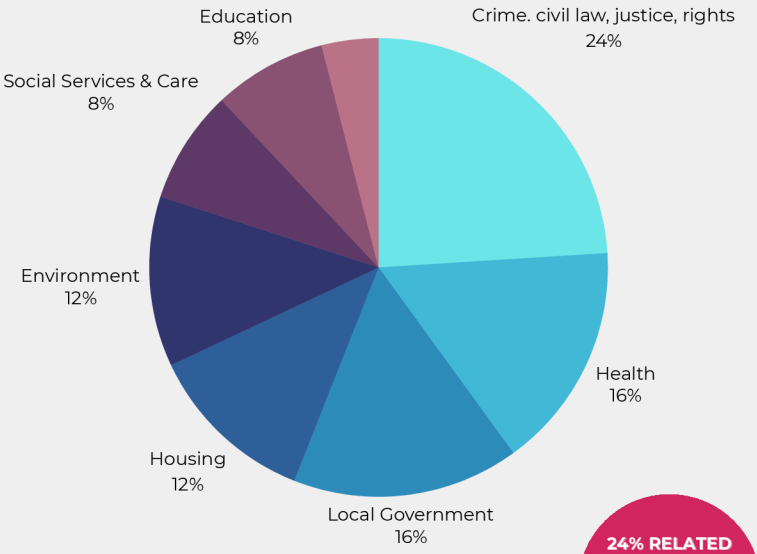
WORKING FOR THE LOTHIAN REGION, WORKING FOR YOU







CASEWORK



ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON THE RISE

24% RELATED TO CRIME, JUSTICE, CIVIL, JUSTICE, RIGHTS

Anti-social behaviour continues to be a big and ongoing problem for many constituents. Several of my cases relate to the anti-social behaviour of neighbours and the affect that this has on their everyday lives.

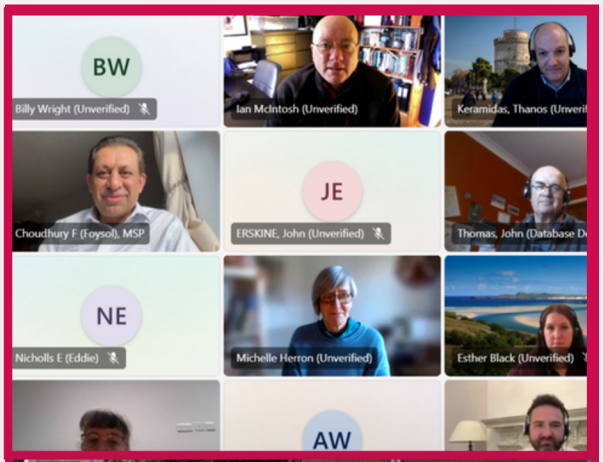
I continue to liaise with local authorities and Police Scotland on behalf of constituents.



SCOTLAND'S SOCIAL CARE CRISIS?

Health and Social Care remain issues that several constituents have contacted me about this month, and I have written to the Cabinet Secretary of Health and Social Care on behalf of a constituent regarding her concerns for the care her elderly mother received.

More and more constituents are writing regarding cuts to social care packages as local authorities are forced to make cuts due to inadequate funding from the Scottish Government.









The social care system is crying out for support, with the SNP wasting valuable time and money on its bungled National Care Service plans.

HOUSING ISSUES ACCOUNT FOR 16% OF NEW CASES

SCOTLAND'S HOUSING EMERGENCY

Homelessness, inadequate housing, damp, housing, and housing that is not adapted to people's needs continue to be issues that constituents are contacting me about.

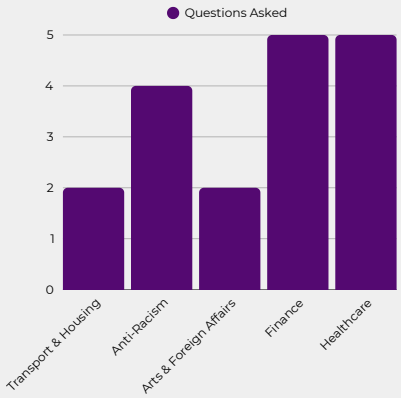
I have also raised the inadequacy of social housing to the First Minister, raising the case of my constituent who is forced to share a bed with their 13-year-old child as there is no suitable accommodation available.

It is vital that the Scottish Government tackles the housing emergency that so many constituents face.

0131 348 6761

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PARLIAMENT



22 QUESTIONS ASKED...

MY PRIORITY FOR THE LOTHIAN REGION IS VOICING YOUR CONCERNS

HEALTHCARE
FINANCE
ANTI-RACISM

LEADING THE FIRST MEMBERS' BUSINESS OF 2025

I was honoured to lead the first member's business of 2025 advocating for access to diabetes technology.



I followed up on this later in the month, asking the First Minister about the current care from the NHS going against SIGN 170 guidelines.

Access to diabetes technology isn't a luxury—it's a necessity. Listen to those with T1 tell their story.

DEMANDING ACTION ON SCOTLAND'S HOUSING EMERGENCY

This month, a constituent has come forward asking how it is acceptable that they must share a bed with their child while waiting for housing.



PRIORITSING OUR EDUCATION & SKILLS

With higher levels of disruptive behaviour amongst children with communication hindrances and a 17% vacancy rate for speech therapists, I questioned the Scottish Government on what is being done to address this gap.

A VICTORY FOR SCOTLAND'S ARTS & CULTURE

The announcement of the Creative Scotland multi-year funding outcomes is a significant development for Scotland's cultural sector, providing clarity and assurance to organisations for the coming years.

Both Labour Shadow Minister for Culture, MSP Neil Bibby and I have repeatedly called for increased funding, asking tens of questions in parliament and calls for action in the media.



The local groups, advocates, and artists are to thank for their continue push for long-term secure funding, finally making the Scottish Government address their importance.

QUESTIONING THE FIRST MINISTER ON THE THREAT TO SCOTLAND'S ARTS & CULTURE

I have advocated for Scotland's arts and culture sector once again this month, asking the First Minister about the urgent threat to Scotland's arts & culture, with National Galleries facing a "critical level" risk of severe incidents in their buildings.



I urged the Scottish Government to ensure that no National Gallery shut its doors.



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COMMUNITY

HEALTH AND WELLBEING: MAINTAINING CONNECTION WITH HEALTHCARE ORGANISATIONS

My mission to improve accessibility to health care and proper treatment across Scotland continues. I met with RNIB Scotland, a wonderful charity supporting blind and partially sighted people to live as independently as possible. I met with the staff of St. John's Hospital to hear about the challenges they face & the innovative work they do in oral & maxillofacial surgery. Additionally, I attended the Scottish Parliamentary reception, 'The Daffodil Standards for Community Pharmacy,' hosted by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society in partnership with Marie Curie and sponsored by Dame Jackie Baillie MSP.



A BUSY MONTH FOR ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES: SCOTLAND POLICY LAB

I was honoured to have hosted the AHRC Creative Communities Policy event, showcasing how culture, research & development enhance health & wellbeing. Thanks to Creative Communities Policy Lead Helen Apsey & all involved for their innovation. It was an inspiring evening discussing the importance of culture, and how it is vital to have creative opportunities and experiences for all. By enabling collaboration and engagement across and beyond our communities, involving the wider public.



YOUTH VOICES: CHARITIES AND GROUPS CHAMPIONING YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Throughout the last month, I have met with different organisations and charities that are focusing their priority on youth empowerment. I met with members of the Anne Frank Trust UK, a charity focusing on 9–15-year-olds, challenging all forms of prejudice. Kooth UK, a charity focusing on support and access to mental health services. Additionally, I met with the team from Ullapool Sea Savers, a group focusing on marine conservation for children. I continue to engage with the Scottish Youth Parliament, listening to ideas and concerns, working towards solutions for the future.



EDINBURGH CHINESE NEW YEAR 2025

I was thrilled to attend the 2025 Edinburgh Chinese New Year Concert. It was a fantastic evening celebrating the fusion of Chinese and Scottish music, with incredible performances showcasing the rich cultural traditions of both nations. A massive well done to Jessica Guo of the Asian Association of Culture, Commerce, and Education in Europe (AACCEE) for organising yet another successful concert - truly a night to remember!



INTERNATIONAL FAIR TRADE TOWNS CONFERENCE 2025

The 18th International Fair Trade Towns Conference will take place in Edinburgh, Scotland, from Saturday 30 August to Sunday 31 August 2025. The theme for the conference this year is Your Town, Our World – Fair Trade Communities & Local Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. You can get your tickets here!

IN THE PRESS

EVENING NEWS

WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER TO COMBAT RACISM - FOYSOL CHOUDHURY

EDINBURGH REPORTER

FROM CRISIS TO COMMUNITY: TACKLING HUNGER IN SCOTLAND (PRINT ONLY)



From Crisis to Community: Tackling Hunger in Scotland

by FOYSOL CHOUDHURY MSP

I MET with representatives from the Trussell Trust, a leading anti-poverty charity and food bank network committed to ensuring that no one in Scotland relies on a food bank. The growing reliance on food banks is primarily driven by financial hardship. Many people cannot afford to eat, stay warm, and pay their bills. Hunger, therefore, is not just a matter of food shortages but an issue of income—one that intersects with several policy areas, including work, social security, mental health, and care.

While addressing food insecurity may seem overwhelming, there are steps we can take to limit hunger and mitigate its impact on communities. The key is ensuring that the social security system adequately supports those in need, providing timely access to assistance, and coming together as a community to support those in need. In their efforts to alleviate food insecurity, the Trust has identified four essential building blocks needed to end the hunger crisis. These include:

1. A supportive social security system that provides a safety net for those in need.
2. The affordability of essentials, ensuring that everyone can meet their basic needs.
3. Efficient access to support services, including financial advice and trauma-informed mental health care.
4. Dignified support tailored to people's real-life circumstances, such as enhanced services for disabled individuals.

To truly eliminate the need for food banks, the income from work and social security must cover the cost of essentials. This is why the Trussell Trust is advocating for increased universal credit, ensuring that people have enough money to afford food, toiletries, and other essentials. They also call for an increase in the Scottish Child Payment to £40 per week to help families with young children facing food insecurity.

I'd like to highlight the scale of the work the Trust operates, with 1,400 food banks, supported by 36,000 volunteers and hundreds of community groups and schools. Last year alone, they distributed 3.1 million emergency food parcels—just one organisation in a broader effort. Between April 2023 and March 2024, 262,400 emergency food parcels were handed out, with 156,200 of these going to families with children. This marks a significant increase from five years ago, underscoring the scale of the crisis. These figures point to a shocking reality: approximately 1.2 million Scots living with food insecurity.

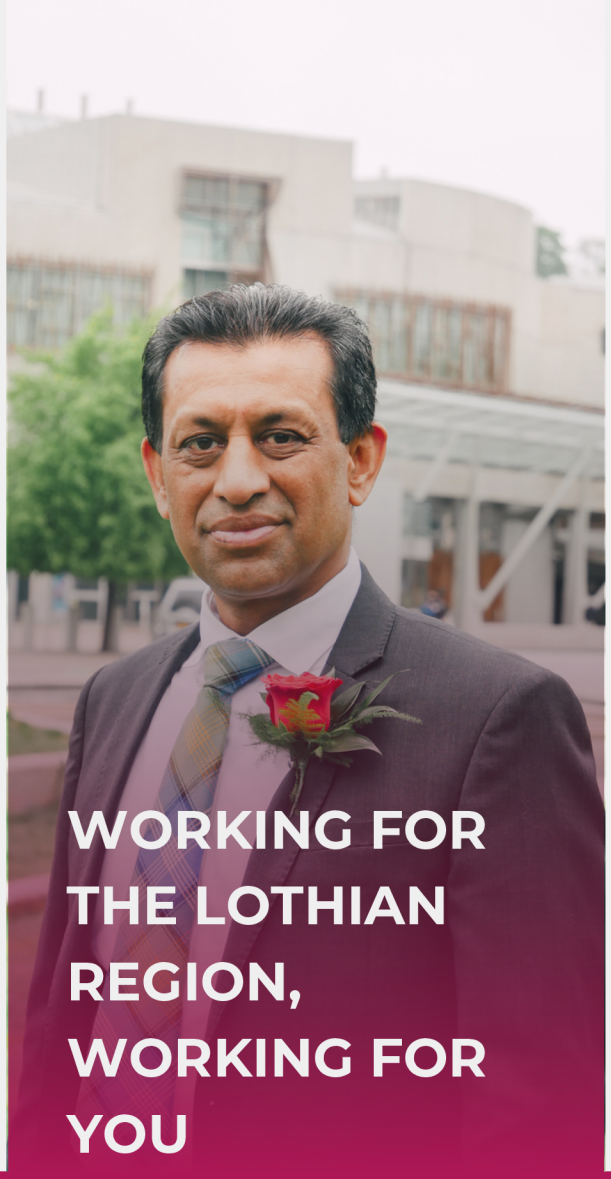
I'd like to highlight the community of my constituency office, Leith, and how it exemplifies how people can come together to support those in need. This vibrant community is home to several resources aimed at alleviating hunger, including numerous food banks and pantries. These are located at various sites across the community, including South Leith Parish Church, Leith St Andrews Church Hall, Pilrig St. Paul's Church Hall, and St. Margaret's Parish Church, among others. The work of the Trussell Trust and communities like Leith are examples of Scotland's residents coming together in times of need. These hard times are often exacerbated over the holiday season, but I invite you to support ending food insecurity by supporting the Trussell Trust and donating to your local food bank all year round.

DAILY RECORD

LOTHIANS MSP LEADS HOLYROOD DEBATE ON ACCESS TO MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY FOR DIABETIC PATIENTS - DAILY RECORD

NORTH EDINBURGH NEWS

CHOUDHURY: "EDINBURGH DESERVES CLEAN BEACHES, NOT SEWAGE SCANDALS" – THE NEN – NORTH EDINBURGH NEWS



WORKING FOR THE LOTHIAN REGION, WORKING FOR YOU

THANK YOU FOR STAYING INFORMED AND ENGAGED. LET'S CONTINUE WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER SCOTLAND.

FOYSOL CHOUDHURY MSP

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ACCESS TO MY WEBSITE

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ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE FILL OUT THIS GOOGLE FORM!

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