

Treatment waiting times worst on record under SNP

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27 Feb 2018



Performance on treating patients within 18 weeks of referral sank to its worst on record towards the end of last year, it has emerged.

Figures released by ISD Scotland have revealed fewer than 81 per cent of people were seen to in the target timeframe, despite the target being 90 per cent.

The rate has dropped considerably over the years, with today's report detailing statistics as far back as October 2011, when just one in 10 missed the target.

It's the latest set of figures revealing the SNP's poor management of the NHS.

And while performance in November and December improved marginally, it is considerably poorer than it should be, the Scottish Conservatives said.

It means nine of Scotland's 14 regional health board are missing the 18-week referral-to-treatment target.

Geographical performance varied hugely, with a third of patients in NHS Grampian waiting too long for treatment to begin.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"We know the quicker a patient can begin treatment, the better chance they have of recovery.

"Despite that, performance under this SNP government is getting worse and worse, with October being the poorest month on record.

"It's more proof that, under a nationalist government in Scotland, the NHS is on its knees.

"The impact of this disastrous performance puts patients' lives at risk – it really is as simple as that.

"The SNP cannot point the finger at anyone else. This performance began to nosedive in 2012, five years after the party came to power, and it has

worsened ever since on its watch.”

SNP merger of Police Scotland and BTP delayed

21 Feb 2018



The controversial move to bring the British Transport Police under the control of Scotland's single force has been delayed.

The SNP wants Police Scotland to take control of transport policing north of the border, despite BTP officers and other experts warning against the move.

The merger was initially planned to take place in April 2019, but the Scottish Government today announced that will now be put back.

It is understood concerns over IT systems may be among the reasons for the delay, which justice secretary Michael Matheson admitted was “disappointing”.

In a statement, he said the timetable for the move would be extended, allowing a “re-planning” exercise.

Numerous issues have been raised since the SNP government announced the plans last year, including pensions, funding, IT and officers choosing not to switch over.

Critics have also questioned whether or not crisis-hit Police Scotland is in a position to take on more responsibilities.

And the Scottish Conservatives said if an IT failing was the reason for the delay, it would be yet another example of incompetence in that area following problems processing farming payments and running systems for NHS 24.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

“While this SNP merger may have hit the buffers, it's time it was derailed altogether.

“The Scottish Conservatives have campaigned to stop this flawed plan for some time, and we're glad there's at least been a delay which might allow the SNP to do some proper planning and strategising.

“It's an unpopular move that virtually nobody is in favour of, with ideology and dogma seemingly the motive.

“There have been numerous concerns about this proposal, all of which should be enough to force the SNP into a rethink.

“The nationalists have already messed up one Police Scotland IT project, as well as failed systems impacting farming payments and NHS 24.

“It calls into question their ability to govern competently.”

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15 Feb 2018



Figures compiled from the Care Inspectorate; Early Learning and Childcare Statistics, show that childcare availability for poorer families has decreased while for more affluent families it is increasing.

The SNP has committed to making childcare provisions available and equal to all.

However, these figures show that the recent expansion of childcare provision has primarily benefitted the most affluent, and has actually become slightly less available for the most deprived families.

These revelations come after damning Audit Scotland highlighted “significant risks” in the SNP’s policy to double early learning and childcare hours by 2020.

The findings demonstrate that in 2013 there were 54.4 childcare providers per 10,000 residents in Scotland for the most deprived families, which shrank to 53.6 by 2017.

This is in stark contrast to the least deprived families where, in 2013, the figure was 107.3.

And, last year, that figure rose to 110.3.

Scottish Conservative childcare spokeswoman Michelle Ballantyne said:

“All families need access to high quality, flexible and affordable childcare but these figures show if you are from a more deprived background, you are less likely to have access to funded childcare than if you come from a more

affluent family.

“The SNP has committed to ensuring equality of access but as this report highlights, this is simply not true. In fact, the situation is actively getting worse.

“If trends continue in this way, poorer families will be increasingly disadvantaged, which will in turn have serious consequences for their abilities to manage family and working life.

“Despite all their big talk, the SNP has totally failed once again to help the families most in need of support.

“Indeed, Maree Todd’s shambolic appearance on Good Morning Scotland highlights the SNP’s staggering complacency regarding the implementation of its childcare policy”.

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15 Feb 2018



A report for Audit Scotland into the SNP childcare and early learning policy has raised a series of concerns regarding its achievability and planning.

Councils are preparing to provide 1,140 funded hours for all 3 and 4-year-olds – and eligible two year-olds – to improve outcomes for children and to support parents to work, study or train.

This report suggests that the requisite increase in childcare staff and changes to premises will be difficult to achieve, detailed planning should have started earlier and there remains a considerable gap between what local councils and the Scottish Government expect the policy to cost.

The report also assessed the earlier 2014 expansion of funded early learning and childcare to 600 hours.

On this earlier expansion the report states that the government did not identify measures of success before committing almost £650m to the increase, making it difficult to assess whether it is delivering value for money.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

“This Audit Scotland report is damning in term of exposing the failures of SNP policy on child care.

“It makes clear that there has been no attempt to evaluate different options in terms of delivering the additional hours of child care, or, just as importantly, the cost implications.

“Therefore, providers and councils have no idea of whether the current investment is delivering value for money and parents are left frustrated because the current system is still not delivering the flexibility they need.

“This is a very serious wake-up call for the SNP. It has been all talk on the surface but, on the ground, there are fundamental issues at stake which are impacting on the effectiveness of children’s care.”

[Productivity in Scotland under SNP lowest since 2009](#)

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14 Feb 2018



Figures released today by the Scottish Government have shown that Scotland’s productivity (output per hour worked) has dropped to its lowest level in more than eight years.

The Labour Productivity Statistics for the July-September 2017 Quarter show that Scotland’s trend based productivity has dropped to its lowest level since the fourth quarter of 2009.

On an annual basis, productivity declined 3.2 per cent in the year to end-September 2017. In the last quarter alone, from July to September 2017, productivity is estimated to have dropped 0.7 per cent.

These figures demonstrate again that the SNP has failed to reach one of their main economic ‘Purpose Targets’.

The target, originally set in 2007, was to rank in the top quarter of OECD countries for productivity by 2017.

Scotland is currently approximately 16th among OECD countries regarding

productivity, well below the top quarter.

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said:

“Improving productivity (output per hour worked), is the key driver to overall economic success in the long-term and has a direct impact on real wages and living standards.

“Productivity under the SNP has now declined to its lowest level in Scotland for eight years and is well-below levels in the rest of the UK.

“The SNP has control over the enterprise and economic development powers that can positively change productivity in Scotland.

“Instead of improving productivity however, the SNP has decided to make Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK and to increase the tax burden on business.

“It is no wonder that Scotland’s economy under the SNP is facing the weakest period of growth for 60 years.”