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- New figures reveal thousands of beds lost in Scotland's NHS

11 May 2017



Hospitals across Scotland have lost more than 8000 beds since 2003, official statistics have revealed.

According to the Scottish Government, there are now 21,028 non-intensive care beds across the country.

That compares to 29,445 beds 13 years ago, a reduction of almost 30 per cent.

The Scottish Conservatives said while there was a shift in the way people are treated, with many being cared for in non-hospital settings, the drop was still "hugely significant".

The figures were released following a parliamentary question by Scottish Conservative MSP Miles Briggs.

They also revealed the number of intensive care beds have increased, from 700 in 2003 to more than 900 now.

The decrease in non-intensive care beds has hit health boards across the country.

In NHS Lothian there were reductions at St John's Hospital in Livingston (503 to 432), while Ninewells Hospital in Dundee (854 to 800) and Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (870 to 682) also experienced bed cuts.

Since the SNP came to power and assumed full control of the health brief in 2007, the number of overall non-intensive beds have gone from 26,367 to 21,028, a drop of a fifth.

Scottish Conservative public health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

"We know the way people are being treated is changing, with more receiving the care they need outwith hospital settings.

"However, the SNP cannot just hide behind that argument when bed numbers have dropped by nearly a third since 2003. That's hugely significant.

"The population is increasing and ageing, and the pressure on the NHS is like never before.

“That’s why the Scottish Government has to get the balance right, and simply slashing the number of beds without thinking of the consequences is not the way to do it.

“This is more evidence of an SNP distracted by its obsession with breaking up Britain, neglecting our precious NHS in the process.”

Below is the number of non-intensive care beds by year in Scotland:

2003 – 29,445
2004 – 28,481
2005 – 27,741
2006 – 27,018
2007 – 26,367
2008 – 25,804
2009 – 25,083
2010 – 24,116
2011 – 23,290
2012 – 22,786
2013 – 22,521
2014 – 22,220
2015 – 21,560
2016 – 21,028

To see a full breakdown of the number of beds lost since 2003, visit:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Hospital-Beds.xlsx>

[SNP must publish secret report which blasts CAP payment chaos](#)

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- SNP must publish secret report which blasts CAP payment chaos

10 May 2017



Ministers have been urged to make public a “highly critical” report into the recent CAP cash crisis, which delayed payments worth hundreds of millions of pounds to Scottish farmers.

Members of Holyrood’s rural economy and connectivity committee were today

given sight of a report commissioned by the Scottish Government in the wake of the fiasco.

However, the MSPs have been ordered to keep the paper private amid claims publishing it would breach commercial sensitivity.

The Scottish Government adds that the report – carried out by firm Fujitsu – contains details of live contracts which could be jeopardised by its release.

It was triggered after the Scottish Government's IT system processing CAP payments failed to get the money through to farmers, causing massive delays and pushing many to the brink of going out of business.

Various MSPs who were given an executive summary said it was "damning" and "highly critical", while convener Edward Mountain said it was "unacceptable" the full report had not been published.

At today's meeting, Scottish Government civil servants confirmed the report highlighted the need for "remedial action" and that there were "system defects".

In contrast to the SNP's secrecy in the issue, the Scottish Conservatives last year pledged in their rural manifesto to hold an official probe into the CAP payments crisis.

Scottish Conservative shadow rural affairs secretary Peter Chapman said:

"This was a scandal which starved Scotland's rural communities of hundreds of millions of pounds.

"Yet now the SNP appears to want to keep secret a damning report on the issue.

"How is the Scottish Government supposed to improve these systems in future if it's not willing to be transparent?

"Farmers across the country will be furious at this attempt to bury a report which clearly contains very severe criticism for the SNP and its ability to help Scotland's rural communities."

The Scottish Conservatives have been repeatedly critical of the SNP on CAP payments:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/04/farmer-income-plummeted-as-snp-bounced-cap-payments/>

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/03/probe-into-cap-payments-fiasco-will-be-at-heart-of-rural-plan/>

[Ruth: Sturgeon's 'grubby spin operation' on fishing exposed](#)

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- Ruth: Sturgeon's 'grubby spin operation' on fishing exposed

10 May 2017



The Scottish Conservatives have condemned the SNP after its “grubby” attempt to spread misinformation about Scotland’s fishing industry backfired today.

Nicola Sturgeon took to social media last night to claim a private letter from the UK Government to the Scottish Fishermen’s Federation showed that ministers were preparing to “sell out” fishing communities.

However, in a statement today, the SFF dismissed her allegations, insisting that “any reading of this letter in full makes it clear that the UK Government is committed to ensuring we exit the CFP”.

It added that UK Government ministers had made clear to them that the government “shares the determination of the entire industry to seize this opportunity to re-generate our coastal communities”.

Ruth is today demanding that the First Minister retracts her claims – and explains why the SNP chose to put private correspondence between the SFF and the UK Government into the public domain.

Speaking after she met fishing leaders in Peterhead, Scottish Conservative Leader Ruth Davidson said:

“Nicola Sturgeon’s grubby spin operation has been found out – and the SNP’s scaremongering has been exposed for the trash it is.

“The First Minister’s hands are all over this – she took to social media to whip up unfounded claims about the UK Government’s approach to our fishing industry.

“Scotland’s fishing leaders have directly contradicted her to make it clear they are satisfied with the UK Government’s approach.

“If Nicola Sturgeon has even a shred of decency, she will retract her absurd claims.

“She also needs to explain why the SNP chose to put this private correspondence between the SFF and the UK Government into the public domain.

“The only lesson we can draw from this is that the nationalists are panicking

and are now resorting to amateur leaking and baseless spin in an attempt to cling onto seats all over Scotland.

“Scots everywhere are increasingly seeing through the SNP.

“The Scottish Conservatives will lead Scotland’s fightback against the SNP – and stand up to their unwanted plan for a second referendum.”

[European Commission confirms SNP plans would place fishing industry back under CFP](#)

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- European Commission confirms SNP plans would place fishing industry back under CFP

10 May 2017



SNP plans to rejoin the EU would place Scotland’s fishing industry back under the control of the Common Fisheries Policy, the European Commission has confirmed.

In a letter to Scottish Conservative MEP Dr Ian Duncan, fisheries commissioner Karmenu Vella said a new country joining the EU would not be able to opt out from the CFP, as one of the bloc’s ‘exclusive competence areas’.

Commissioner Vella’s statement places the SNP under fresh pressure to clarify its approach to Scotland’s vital fishing industry.

Nicola Sturgeon demanded a second independence referendum on the back of the UK’s vote to leave the EU and her party’s policy is for Scotland to join the EU as an independent state.

However, in a gesture incompatible with the policy, SNP MPs have signed a fishing pledge rejecting any move which would return the industry to CFP control.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, who will visit Peterhead today, said:

“Nicola Sturgeon is treating Scotland’s fishing communities with utter

contempt.

“Her policy is to return to the despised Common Fisheries Policy – but she wants to pretend otherwise.

“The SNP cannot have it both ways. Scotland’s fishing communities will not be fooled by them.

“Fishermen see great opportunities after Brexit so the most important thing for their industry is to secure the best deal for Scotland and the whole of the UK when we leave the EU.

“A vote for the Scottish Conservatives is a vote to leave the CFP for good.”

Ian Duncan, who is also the Scottish Conservatives’ General Election candidate in Perth and North Perthshire, said:

“We have confirmation once again from the EU’s fisheries commissioner that no state can join the EU without joining the Common Fisheries Project.

“No ifs, no buts, no negotiation.

“If you are not in the CFP, you are not in the EU.

He added: “The SNP’s claims that Scotland could somehow negotiate its way out of the CFP are worthless, as Spain for one would veto the country’s membership in the first place.”

Ends

Notes to editors

Commissioner Vella’s letter ([link](#)) confirms the CFP is a non-negotiable cornerstone of EU membership.

Despite their party’s plan to rejoin the EU, a group of SNP MPs have signed the Scottish Fishermen’s Federation’s ‘Brexit, Sea of Opportunity’ pledge, which opposes ‘any policy, practice or treaty which would return the UK to the Common Fisheries Policy.

Ruth Davidson will visit Peterhead fish market today (Wednesday, May 10) to meet fishermen and industry leaders.

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- Figures show SNP's 'shameful' performance on education

9 May 2017



New figures released today have shown that reading and writing standards among pupils in Scotland have fallen to 'shameful' levels.

The latest Scottish Survey for Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN) showed a rise in the percentage of pupils who are functionally illiterate from 7% to 16% in the last four years.

Fewer than half of S2 pupils in Scotland were performing well in writing, down from 64% in 2012.

The figures also showed that Scotland's attainment gap continues to exist, with pupils from the least deprived areas outperforming those from the most deprived areas at all stages – with the gap similar to that seen in 2012.

Despite the findings in the SSLN, the SNP Government are still planning to cancel all future reports.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith MSP said:

"These are shameful results which show that over its ten years in office this SNP government has failed a generation.

"Performance in writing still seems to be the biggest problem, including the fact that there appears to be a disparity between pupils' views of how they are performing in writing and listening and how they are actually performing.

"Given this evidence, it is abundantly clear that the Scottish Government is not doing enough to address the problems in basic literacy that this data highlights.

"It also shows that a very persistent gap between pupils from the most deprived areas and the least deprived areas continues, and that needs to be tackled.

"The SSLN evidence is a central piece of evidence, produced by the Scottish Government, which gives us important information as to how children are performing.

"These figures also show why it is so essential that there is a strong data base, particularly since the Scottish Government has decided to discontinue the SSLN and has removed Scotland from TIMSS and PIRLS."

Some of the statistics included in the SSLN include:

- At P4 level, since 2012 the percentage of children being able to read

well or very well has fallen by 5 per cent, and for writing, it has fallen by 2 per cent.

- At P7 level, since 2012 the percentage of children being able to read well or very well has fallen by 2 per cent, and for writing, it has fallen by 7 per cent.
- At S2 level, there was a slight increase of 2 per cent from 2014, but no improvement on 2012 figures. Worryingly S2 pupils who can write well or very well has dramatically fallen from 65 per cent in 2012 to 49 per cent in 2016.

The percentage of children in S2 who are not at the required level in writing has more doubled in 4 years from 7 per cent in 2012 to 16 per cent in 2016.