

The SNP's NHS blame game attacked

15 Sep 2019



The SNP's "blame game" on the NHS will be attacked in Holyrood this week, following more revelations about Scotland's ailing health service.

The Scottish Conservatives will use their party business on Wednesday to highlight a series of examples from across the country where SNP ministers have abandoned responsibility and instead hung health boards out to dry.

Last week, health secretary Jeane Freeman shirked accountability for the Sick Kids fiasco in Edinburgh, insisting the decade-long saga was the fault of NHS Lothian chiefs.

The nationalist government has also been quick to blame the NHS in Glasgow and private companies for the farce surrounding the £800 million Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

And over the weekend, spiralling costs at a new hospital and cancer centre in Aberdeen were also revealed, something ministers in Edinburgh have refused to take ownership of.

That follows a bullying crisis at NHS Highland, major governance problems in NHS Tayside and financial meltdowns at other health boards including NHS Ayrshire and Arran.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said, after more than 12 years in charge of Scotland's NHS, it was time for the SNP to take direct responsibility for these issues.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"At least half of Scotland's mainland health boards have suffered major problems in recent years, yet the SNP government takes no responsibility whatsoever. The nationalists only want to play a blame game.

"We've got major construction issues in Lothian, Glasgow and Grampian.

"That's on top of governance chaos in Tayside, a bullying crisis in the Highlands and financial fiascos in Ayrshire and Arran.

"The SNP has had complete control over health for more than 12 years in Scotland.

"This can't all just be the fault of individual health boards – it all comes home to this nationalist administration.

"And that's what happens when you have a Scottish Government which instead of focusing on things that matter, has instead prioritised Scottish

independence.

“It is long past time SNP ministers got a grip on the growing problems facing Scotland’s health services.

“As each SNP health secretary comes and goes its clear they have no new ideas or vision for our Scottish NHS. Just bluster, blame and deflection.”

[SNP must work ‘proactively’ to tackle shortage of residential drug rehab](#)

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12 Sep 2019



The SNP government must start tackling the shortage of drug and alcohol rehabilitation services ‘proactively’ rather than reacting to bad headlines, a north-east MSP said today.

Alexander Burnett asked about the future of local services at First Minister’s Questions today following the closure of the Alexander Clinic in Oldmeldrum.

Mr Burnett had tabled a question to the government earlier this week, which prompted media coverage of the issue.

Today, Nicola Sturgeon said that the government’s new recovery strategy is due to be published in October.

Drug and alcohol support workers in Aberdeenshire were contacted by civil servants by telephone after the publication of the article and told that actions they had been calling for inclusion in the document would now be delivered.

Speaking after FMQs today, Mr Burnett, MSP for Aberdeenshire West, said:

“I am pleased to hear that the Scottish Government will be focusing on residential rehabilitation in its national delivery plan.

“I am concerned, however, that it seems to have taken press coverage of my intervention on the issue to spur officials into action in Aberdeenshire.

“We should not have to chase the government to deliver on this hugely important issue.

“Drug deaths in Scotland are spiralling and a key part of the strategy for turning around those figures will be the provision of more residential rehab.

“The north-east cannot be left without any facilities to help those struggling with addiction.

“I will keep the pressure on this SNP government to deliver better support for people in the north-east and indeed across Scotland.”

[More than 300,000 kids miss out on new Sick Kids hospital care](#)

12 Sep 2019



Children in need of emergency hospital care have missed out on treatment at the new Sick Kids hospital on more than 300,000 occasions because of delays to the project, it has emerged.

The £150 million facility at Edinburgh’s Little France site was supposed to be up-and-running by the end of 2012, but now won’t open its doors until at least the autumn of next year.

Now Scottish Conservative research has revealed that, in that time, 312,441 youngsters have received accident and emergency care at the outdated facility in Sciennes.

That’s in addition to the estimated 34,000 outpatient appointments which take place at the hospital each year.

Nicola Sturgeon was challenged on the issue at First Minister’s Questions today.

She admitted she was “angry” at the situation, but suggested her SNP government shouldn’t take responsibility for the failings.

Yesterday, health secretary Jeane Freeman said more problems at the new building meant further delays to the scheme.

In addition to the extra year’s wait, taxpayers will now also have to find an extra £16 million to fix the latest problems.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"The ongoing problems over the last decade in relation to the Sick Kids project have been well publicised.

"Yet it seems SNP government ministers chose either not to know, or simply failed to ask, about the full extent of these issues until way too late.

"This has been an absolute shambles.

"The Sick Kids hospital was supposed to open at the end of 2012. Since then, more than 300,000 children in A&E alone have been denied access to the new hospital they and their parents were promised.

"This saga is sadly all too common.

"Ministerial assurances are given, completion dates pushed back then costs spiral out of control.

"Yet, at the end of it all, no-one is held to account."

[SNP admits Sick Kids won't open for at least another year](#)

11 Sep 2019



Edinburgh's new Sick Kids hospital won't be open for at least another year, and fixing the latest blunders will cost the taxpayer an extra £16 million.

In a statement at Holyrood today, health secretary Jeane Freeman revealed problems with ventilation, water systems and drainage will "take time" to address.

She told MSPs: "It is clear that there is significant work to be undertaken to ensure the site is fully compliant."

On top of the additional £16 million costs, NHS Lothian will continue to pay £1.35 million a month to the site owners at Little France, which will total a further £16 million by the time the hospital opens.

The replacement Sick Kids was supposed to open at the end of 2012, but has been repeatedly delayed due to a range of "catastrophic failings".

Ms Freeman also told parliament today that the adjacent brain unit will be impacted, and may not open until the spring.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“This confirms that patients and their families will have had to wait nearly a decade longer than promised for this much-needed hospital.

“On top of that, the taxpayer will have to fork out more than £30 million between now and next autumn to compensate for these catastrophic failings.

“Staff and families alike will also be sceptical about whether this hospital will be open by next autumn.

“They’ve been promised – year after year – that new timescales will be adhered to, and they’ve been repeatedly let down.

“All over the world new hospitals are built and delivered on time and on budget.

“Yet under the SNP, from the very outset, this project has been a farce.

“As a result, thousands of young and vulnerable patients from across Scotland will suffer.

“In a cynical move SNP ministers think a 30-minute statement and sneaking out two major reports on the hospital is acceptable when it comes to answering questions.

“It is not and they should hang their heads in shame if they think this is how they prevent parliament holding them to account.

“The scandal surrounding the construction of the new Sick Kids hospital has come to symbolise this SNP government’s incompetence and mismanagement of our NHS.”

[Sturgeon wants to plunge Scotland back into referendum division](#)

5 Sep 2019



Nicola Sturgeon has again said she wants to overturn the result of the EU referendum, just weeks ahead of the UK’s Brexit deadline.

She told Jackson Carlaw at First Minister’s Questions today that, rather than see UK Government negotiations succeed, she wanted to thwart them.

The interim leader of the Scottish Conservatives said her bid to derail Brexit was simply a move to get independence back on the table, and return Scotland to “yet more division”.

It follows an SNP plot, along with other opposition parties at Westminster, to delay the Brexit process.

Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Nicola Sturgeon doesn’t want to see successful negotiations between the UK and the EU – she wants to weaken the UK Government’s hand and for the talks to fail.

“The last thing the SNP wants is for Scotland to move on and – together with the rest of the UK – secure a Brexit that works for everyone.

“She wants to drag the process out, and plunge Scotland back into the divisions of recent years.

“The Scottish Conservatives will stand up for and stand by our decision to remain within the UK, and back the decision made to leave the EU.

“To get back to the things that matter – schools, jobs, police.

“Nicola Sturgeon would only bring chaos and uncertainty.”