

[SNP urged to act on Scotland's 1000-a-day methadone prescription crisis](#)

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31 Jul 2019



The SNP government has been urged to reduce the number of drug users who are “parked” on methadone – after new figures revealed more than 1000 prescriptions are dished out a day.

Statistics obtained by the Scottish Conservatives revealed 406,588 items were dispensed in 2018/19, the equivalent of 1114 a day.

And while that's a slight reduction on previous years, it still means thousands of heroin users are being given next to no chance of fully recovering from addiction.

Scotland is currently the drug deaths capital of the developed world, with nearly 1200 people losing their lives to the problem last year alone.

Of those recorded deaths, methadone was present as a contributing factor in nearly half, more than any other drug.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said while methadone had a place in treating drug addiction, it was being far too heavily relied upon, and re-enforced his calls for a review of the programme.

The overall methadone prescription figures show that, since coming to power in 2007, the SNP government has overseen the dispensing of more than 5.6 million doses of the substance.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“People in receipt of methadone are known to services, in regular contact with them, and should be prime candidates for some proper help and pathways into rehabilitation services.

“Instead of parking these vulnerable individuals on methadone, we should be targeting them with a life plan, so they can beat addiction once and for all and turn their lives around.

“In many cases former addicts tell us that methadone is merely prolonging their problems and, as we can see from the most recent published figures, has a fair chance of contributing to drug deaths.

“That is why the Scottish Conservatives have called for an independent review of the methadone programme.

“There are a number of other areas and policy suggestions we want to see SNP ministers do to address Scotland’s drugs crisis, and finally sorting out the over-reliance on methadone is one of them.

“If it fails to do this now, we will see even more tragic and avoidable deaths in future.

“It is clear that the SNP’s 10-year drugs strategy has failed. We need a totally new approach to this national public health emergency.

“That’s why I have called on Nicola Sturgeon to take personal leadership and responsibility of the situation and coordinate a new approach.”

[Derek Mackay suggests signing up to CFP could be ‘trade-off’ to rejoin EU](#)

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- Derek Mackay suggests signing up to CFP could be ‘trade-off’ to rejoin EU

30 Jul 2019



A senior SNP minister has signalled that signing back up to the Common Fisheries Policy would be a “trade-off” for an independent Scotland re-joining the EU.

Finance Secretary Derek Mackay made the comments in response to questions about SNP policy on fishing in a radio interview.

Discussing the prospect of an independent Scotland re-joining the EU, Mr Mackay added the SNP “accepts there would be trade-offs in any political deal”.

The MSP also claimed that “every part” of Scotland, including those “with more fishing interests than others” voted Remain in 2016.

However, research by the University of East Anglia showed that the Westminster constituency of Banff and Buchan – including Europe’s largest white fish port of Peterhead – voted Leave by a majority of 54%.

Scottish Conservative MP for Banff and Buchan David Duguid said:

“Derek Mackay has let the cat out of the bag here and confirmed the SNP would sell out our fishermen in a heartbeat.

“SNP have tried for years to look both ways on fishing.

“But the truth is their plans to break up the UK and rejoin the EU were always going to mean our fishermen would be stuck with the hated CFP.

“However, his claim that fishing communities didn’t vote for Brexit is plain wrong. A majority, estimated at 54%, in Banff and Buchan voted to leave the EU.

“Boris Johnson made clear yesterday that we will be out of the CFP by December 2020 at the latest and that fishing won’t be used as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Brussels.

“Those comments are already being welcomed by fishermen in ports like Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Macduff.

“If the SNP dragged us back into the CFP after separation, it would rightly be viewed as the ultimate betrayal of our fishing communities.”

[Ruth comments following Prime Minister meeting](#)

29 Jul 2019



Below are comments from Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson following her meeting with new Prime Minister Boris Johnson today.

“First and foremost, the Prime Minister and I spoke about our shared determination to strengthen the Union and to make the case against Nicola Sturgeon’s plans for a second referendum on independence.

“We also discussed the many ways the UK Government can work in Scotland, for Scotland, to boost our economy and support key Scottish businesses.

“On Brexit, the Prime Minister has made clear the government’s preference is to leave the European Union with a deal. I back him wholeheartedly in that aim.

“Indeed, all 13 Scottish Conservative MPs backed a deal the last time one was presented in the House of Commons, as did the Prime Minister.

“The SNP’s warnings about No Deal are utterly hypocritical.

“Nicola Sturgeon has already made clear that SNP MPs will vote against any deal the new Prime Minister brings to parliament, just as they voted against the deal brought forward by Theresa May three times.

“Rather than complain from the sidelines, it’s time the First Minister worked with colleagues across the UK, and supported a deal that delivers on the referendum result, gives clarity to Scottish business, delivers for the Scottish fishing industry, and works for us all.”

[Scottish Conservatives unveil agritourism plan to help revitalise rural Scotland](#)

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- Scottish Conservatives unveil agritourism plan to help revitalise rural Scotland

26 Jul 2019



As the first day of the Border Union Show gets underway the Scottish Conservatives have published a plan to accelerate the growth of the agritourism sector in Scotland.

The plan will harness and develop the dynamism of rural entrepreneurs and, in many cases, their existing assets as well as capitalising on the current trend for eco-tourism.

There is a great opportunity to establish a world-class agritourism industry in Scotland, helping to revitalise rural economies and communities, particularly farmers wishing to diversify, according to the Scottish Conservatives.

Tourism is the backbone of the Scottish economy, however, income from this sector is not evenly distributed with almost three times the number of visitors going to Scottish cities rather than rural areas.

At the same time, Scottish farmers are increasingly struggling and face intense pressure to diversify in order to maximise their income.

The Scottish Conservative plan would:

- Establish a centralised rating and quality control scheme for agritourism businesses
- Encouragement of agritourism business models that promote good environmentalism and tackle climate change.
- Create a rural agritourism start-up fund.
- Develop a tier of agritourism qualifications from modern to graduate apprenticeships.
- Involve agritourism in the final stages of the rollout of R100 programme

Rachael Hamilton, Scottish Conservative shadow tourism secretary said:

“Agritourism forms part of the rural economy in many countries across the world.

“Scotland has massive potential to make a success story of agritourism, with so much to offer from excellent food and drink experiences to our dramatic and captivating landscapes.

“Helping farmers develop their farm business further and in turn boosting the rural economy of Scotland is vitally important.

“Our policy paper sets out key recommendations that the Scottish government and the sector should act upon in order to grow the sector.

“There is already fantastic agritourism businesses out there, let’s help many more to develop and flourish”.

[Taxpayers ‘facing consequences’ of SNP’s shipyard negligence](#)

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- Taxpayers ‘facing consequences’ of SNP’s shipyard negligence

19 Jul 2019



Scottish taxpayers may have to come to the rescue of the SNP’s botched approach to shipbuilding, it has been warned.

It was reported this morning that ministers want to nationalise the Ferguson shipyard on the Clyde.

This is despite the nationalists brokering a rescue deal for “political gain” just weeks before the 2014 independence referendum.

But since then, costs for the construction of two new CalMac ferries have soared, with businessman Jim McColl – who rescued the yard in the first place – set to lose millions of pounds as a result.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Responsibility for this mess begins and ends with the SNP government.

“It was Alex Salmond and his ministers who sought political gain when they brokered the deal to save Ferguson before the independence referendum in 2014, in a headline-grabbing move.

“Now, five years later, Scottish taxpayers are facing the consequences of that action.

“Nationalising the yard isn’t the answer and it won’t help Ferguson as it seeks to bid for new contracts.

“However, it appears the SNP’s desire to control everything in Scotland – on the taxpayer’s expense – trumps common sense.

“SNP ministers now must sit down with management to find a way forward – not walk back to the 1970s and a solution that won’t work.”