

Dozens of 'notable incidents' recorded by police control rooms

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- Dozens of 'notable incidents' recorded by police control rooms

16 Apr 2019



Police Scotland have racked up dozens of “notable incidents” in the past 18 months as it continues to battle funding pressure from the SNP government.

Research by the Scottish Conservatives has revealed 182 mistakes between August 2017 and December last year, all of which were deemed serious enough to have a “significant impact” on the reputation of the force.

Of the instances set out, 62 involved officers going to the wrong address, and 81 errors led to a delay in police attending a 999 or 101 call.

Among the most serious matters highlighted were:

- A member of the public threatening to self-harm was dismissed as a “false call”
- Failure to respond to a warning about a missing person, who was later found dead at home by the person making the call
- An assault victim told to go to an unmanned station to report the incident
- Officers failing to attend a domestic abuse call
- A faulty computer was continually used by police due to a lack of alternatives

Although scores of incidents occurred, the total figure accounts for just 0.006 per cent of calls handled by Police Scotland in that time period.

Shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said the scale of the incidents showed the pressure the single force was under following the SNP’s refusal to fund crucial IT upgrades and the failure to support officers and staff during their poorly executed police merger.

The issue was previously raised by Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson at First Minister’s Questions in 2017.

At that point, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said lessons would be learned.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

“In an organisation the size of Police Scotland, there will always be

incidents involving human error.

“But this research sets out scores of cases which, frankly, should never have happened.

“Brave police officers and staff are doing a great job to the best of their abilities, but all too often their needs and welfare have gone ignored.

“The SNP has flat out refused to fund the digital upgrades they promised, meaning officers and call-handlers are under huge strain.

“I’ve visited these control rooms and know exactly how challenging a job it is, and how well staff perform in spite of that. The least they deserve is some adequate support from SNP ministers.

“It’s this sort of environment in which mistakes occur.

“The SNP has been in charge of the justice brief since 2007, and has to take responsibility for the scale of these errors, some of which have had devastating consequences.”

[Kids 6 times more likely to have development problems based on where they live](#)

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- Kids 6 times more likely to have development problems based on where they live

9 Apr 2019



Concern has been raised about the development of toddlers in certain parts of the country – after it emerged a child in Inverclyde is six times more likely to have problems than one in Aberdeenshire.

The postcode lottery has been revealed as part of a study into the health and progress of children aged between 27 and 30 months.

Health visitors assessed more than 56,000 youngsters last year, checking for a range of problems from speech issues to emotional difficulties.

And it’s emerged that while just four per cent of children in Aberdeenshire

registered such problems, that figure jumped to 24 per cent for the council area of Inverclyde.

On the whole, the report said, a child living in the most deprived parts of Scotland was more than twice as likely to flag concerns as one in the wealthiest.

Across Scotland, of the 56,088 children checked, 7813 had at least one developmental concern.

That's 15 per cent of kids, compared to 19 per cent when the tests began four years ago.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"It won't be a surprise to health visitors that youngsters in more deprived areas are more likely to have developmental issues than those in the wealthiest.

"But the geographical gaps across Scotland are stark.

"It's incredible that a toddler born in Inverclyde is six times more likely to have these problems recorded than one in Aberdeenshire.

"Of course, many of these problems will be addressed and sorted out by the time a child attends school.

"But for others, it will create a huge disadvantage for the rest of their lives.

"Ministers must analyse these important statistics as a matter of urgency and ensure this gap is closed for the better in future years."

[Huge drop in primary school music teachers](#)

9 Apr 2019



The number of dedicated music teachers working in Scotland's primary schools has plummeted by 42 per cent in the past seven years.

Latest figures have revealed there were just 62 teachers across the country whose main job in primaries was to teach music last year.

That compares to 108 in 2011, and signals a year-on-year drop under the SNP

government.

It's the latest statistic to show the neglect of music tuition by nationalist ministers, despite high-profile campaigns to increase the number of young people being taught an instrument.

Numerous studies have shown learning a musical instrument not only helps a child across other subject areas, but improves their overall wellbeing.

Yet, according to the official Scottish Government statistics, there are now 10 local authority areas which have no dedicated music teachers working in primary schools at all.

The 62 working in 2018 is a reduction of three from the previous year, and 16 from 2016.

The figures have fallen consistently every year since 2011.

Scottish Conservative children and young people spokeswoman Alison Harris said:

"This is a thoroughly depressing statistic which highlights the neglect of the SNP government in this area.

"We're not talking about a statistical blip here – it's a 42 per cent decrease in the space of seven years.

"That will mean a significantly reduced experience for primary school children all over Scotland.

"The SNP has been warned for years about how important it is for young children to be given the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.

"Yet it's allowed teacher numbers in this area to completely collapse.

"If this doesn't change soon, thousands more youngsters will miss out on opportunities which could shape and influence their entire lives."

[Tax gap between Scotland and rUK widens tomorrow](#)

6 Apr 2019



The Scottish Conservatives have warned that the economy could be damaged by the growing "tax gap" between Scotland and the rest of the UK as the new

financial year begins tomorrow.

Across the UK, all taxpayers will benefit from the UK Government decision to increase the Personal Allowance to £12,500.

Basic rate taxpayers will pay £1205 less tax in 2019/20 than they did in 2010/11, when the Conservatives came to power.

However, Scottish taxpayers will miss out on further tax breaks available to people elsewhere in the UK after the SNP opted not to implement them.

Anyone earning more than £27,000 will pay more tax in Scotland than they would in the rest of the UK – or 45 per cent of taxpayers.

For somebody earning more than £50,000, the differential will now grow in excess of £1,500 a year.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Basic rate taxpayers will keep more of their money as of today thanks to the decision of a Conservative government to cut the taxes of working people.

“Yet anyone earning over £27,000 in Scotland will now be paying more than people elsewhere in the UK thanks to decisions by the SNP government.

“There is now a real fear that the growing tax gap between Scotland and the rest of the UK will damage the Scottish economy.

“How is slapping workers with a Scottish surcharge going to help attract skilled workers to come to Scotland?

“The SNP should have cut government waste, not put up people’s taxes to the highest in the UK.”

[Scores write to Sturgeon’s team complaining about trains](#)

5 Apr 2019



Dozens of commuters are so fed up of Scotland’s train services they’ve written specifically to the First Minister and her transport minister to complain.

Freedom of Information responses have revealed that, in the space of just two months last year, 83 people put pen to paper explaining how they were

“scunnered” with the “abysmal” train service they have been subjected to.

The messages, from commuters and those travelling for social occasions, detail a catalogue of disaster involving late, cancelled and overcrowded trains on a daily basis.

The emails – some from SNP supporters – outline the public’s frustration, annoyance and stress due to the shambolic state of Scotland’s railways.

Many of them also outline the cost such disruption is causing to their personal and professional lives.

One email states: “We are thoroughly scunnered with this abysmal service.” Another adds: “It is like we have gone back to the dark ages.”

A voter who travels to work by train said: “I’m beginning to question whether I need to return to commuting by car.”

And a fed-up traveller concluded: “ScotRail are making false promises and apologies from them are worthless.”

The emails were received in November and December 2018.

Scottish Conservative transport spokesman Jamie Greene said:

“These emails to the First Minister highlight the devastating effects of Scotland’s appalling train service on the travelling public.

“Commuters are regularly subjected to late, cancelled and overcrowded trains at an extremely high financial and personal cost.

“It is astonishing that the SNP government is still failing to ensure that travellers receive a decent service.

“Despite these letters, and the myriad reports of ScotRail failing to reach its targets, Nicola Sturgeon’s government has done nothing to improve train travel in Scotland.

“The SNP government received 83 complaints letters in only two months last year – when will they get a grip of this situation?”