

[SNP must implement three month waiting time target for autism patients](#)

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- SNP must implement three month waiting time target for autism patients

8 Mar 2019



The Scottish Conservatives are calling for the SNP Government to introduce a three month waiting time target for autism patients, from referral to first appointment for autism assessment.

Delays in assessment and diagnosis of autism are extremely traumatic for patients and their families.

The National Audit Association Scotland (NAS) has highlighted the appalling experience of Sarah and her fight to get her son Tom diagnosed with autism.

The process they were forced to endure lasted several years and meant Tom couldn't get the support he needed during that time.

Sarah is calling on the diagnosis process to be significantly speeded up.

Collaborating with NAS, the Scottish Conservatives have published a plan to improve the provision and availability of autism services, with measures that are already in place in the rest of the UK.

The plan calls on the Scottish Government to:

- Introduce a national waiting time target of three months from referral to first appointment for autism assessment.
- Record, publish and monitor autism diagnosis waiting times in every area.
- Introduce a national audit looking at the benefits of faster diagnosis

Further research from the NAS highlights that over 40 percent of respondents found the current process stressful, with over 25 percent saying they had been misdiagnosed.

Scottish Conservative public health and equalities spokesman, Annie Wells MSP said:

“The autism diagnosis process is currently failing patients – the SNP must introduce a three month waiting time target and take direct action to tackling delays in autism diagnosis.

“Having worked closely with the National Autistic Society, it is clear that many youngsters are missing out on vital support in their formative years.

“The SNP must record, publish and monitor autism diagnosis in every health board area, which would give a greater understanding to health professionals.

“These are all measures already in place in the rest of the UK.

“These delays in diagnosing autism cannot simply be allowed to go on and on; instead we must have a SNP Government focused on tackling this as a key mental health priority.”

Nick Ward, Director of The National Autistic Society Scotland, said:

“Many autistic people and parents describe receiving their diagnosis as life changing.

“It can explain why someone has always felt different, help them access vital support and enable them to take control of their lives.

“We know that far too many autistic people have to wait many months, sometimes even years, for a diagnosis because of inadequate and overstretched services where they live.

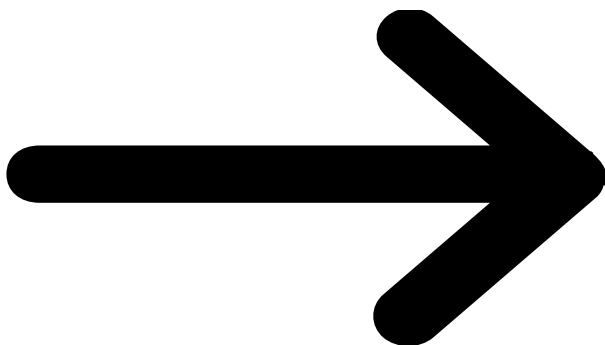
“These long waits can often be traumatic for people who are desperate for help and at risk of developing mental health problems.

“We hope all the political parties will support the Scottish Conservatives’ call for a waiting time standard from referral to assessment of autism to be introduced.

“We believe this is an important step towards ensuring autistic people right across Scotland can access the support they need.”

[SNP in “complete disarray” on IndyRef2](#)

7 Mar 2019



The SNP is in complete disarray on IndyRef 2 after First Minister Nicola Sturgeon today appeared to contradict her deputy Keith Brown.

At First Minister's questions today, Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative interim leader asked the First Minister about the SNP deputy leader, Keith Brown's comments to fellow nationalists that an unofficial referendum should take place, even if the UK Government didn't allow it.

Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative interim leader said:

"The SNP has been found out. Behind closed doors, Nicola Sturgeon and Keith Brown are telling party activists one thing, while telling the public quite another.

"In public, they tell us they're focussed on the day job. In private, they're secretly plotting for an illegal referendum.

"Nicola Sturgeon's slap-down of her deputy today is a humiliation for Mr Brown and shows the SNP is in complete disarray.

"But it doesn't hide the fact that their obsession with a second referendum will always come first – and everything else a distant second."

[Gordon MP attacks SNP's 'reckless' approach on currency](#)

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6 Mar 2019



Gordon MP Colin Clark has used Prime Minister's Questions to launch an attack on the SNP's "reckless" approach to currency in an independent Scotland.

The Scottish Conservative MP said that Nationalists had "resurrected" Alex Salmond's call for a Scottish pound – after arguing in 2014 that a separate Scotland would keep sterling.

Senior figures in the SNP, including Finance Secretary Derek Mackay, have suggested that Scotland could float its own currency within years of becoming independent, while continuing to use the pound informally in the meantime.

Mr Clark, who ousted former First Minister Mr Salmond at the 2017 election, said:

"The SNP Scottish Government has resurrected Alex Salmond's call for a Scottish currency.

“Does the Prime Minister agree this is reckless and risks destabilising the Scottish economy?”

In response, Prime Minister Theresa May said: “Can I say to my right honourable friend, I seem to recall back in the 2014 referendum that the SNP were absolutely adamant that Scotland would keep the pound.

“There have been a few changes since then, they have gone through looking at the option of the Euro, then they went back to sterling and now they are into an independent currency.

“This government is working to secure a Brexit deal that protects jobs and our economy.

“The SNP should focus on that rather than continuing to pursue their independence fantasy.”

Speaking afterwards, Mr Clark added:

“It is clear that you can’t trust the SNP when it comes to the pound in your pocket.

“Along with Derek Mackay’s pledge to eliminate a £13 billion deficit in just a few short years without austerity – the idea of a separate Scottish currency is fantasy economics.”

[Call for fresh focus on impact of cannabis](#)

24 Feb 2019



Scottish Conservatives are today calling for a renewed focus from all levels of government on the damaging impact of cannabis on the young.

It comes as health campaigners warn today that high-strength cannabis can lead to psychosis among teenagers.

Last week, the High Court in Glasgow heard how the killer of Alesha MacPhail, Aaron Campbell, regularly smoked the drug.

In today’s press, Sir Robin Murray, professor of psychiatric research at King’s College London, warned that there was now growing evidence that the use of cannabis in adolescence increased the risk of psychosis.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs MSP said:

“We know that the number of people reporting an addiction to cannabis has risen from 14% to 20% in the space of a decade.

“And we are now learning more and more of the damage that extra-strength street cannabis can cause, especially to adolescents.

“Given all that, it’s clear we need a fresh focus from government at all levels to stop this menace in its tracks.

“The Scottish Conservatives last year set out plans to crack down on Scotland’s drug crisis. There’s a chance for all parties to work together here to tackle this problem at source.

“A clear message needs to go out, especially to young people, that cannabis is a dangerous drug that risks permanently damaging their mental health. We must also do more to ensure that people on cannabis get the support they need to come off it.

“The terrible details emerging from Alesha MacPhail’s death have put the spotlight on this drug. Before the spotlight moves away, we should be working together to crack down on it.

“Scottish Conservatives are determined to see real action from SNP ministers to help young people address addictions and support their families, who often are left to pick up the pieces.

“Timid refreshing of failed SNP policies is simply not good enough. It’s time for a radical new approach to help address drug addictions in Scotland.”

[SNP budget fails Scotland](#)

21 Feb 2019



The Scottish Conservatives have voted against the SNP’s budget, as it will widen the tax gap with the rest of the United Kingdom, impose a Car Park Tax, increase council taxes and reduce local government budgets.

The budget passed with the support of the Greens and the SNP.

Murdo Fraser MSP, Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary said:

“Both the Finance Secretary and the First Minister told opposition parties throughout the budget process that every penny in their budget had been accounted for.

“And yet we now know that SNP knew about additional UK money six days prior

to the debate in this Parliament: money amounting to an additional £148m.

“This is a budget that unnecessarily slashes local government, increases council taxes, widens the tax gap with the rest of the UK and penalises workers via the Car Park Tax.

“This is a budget that fails to revitalise Scotland’s economy which would sustainably increase tax revenues and support public services.

“The Scottish Conservatives reject this omnishambles budget which forces hardworking families to pay more and get less.”