

# Hundreds of u65 dementia patients miss out due to Frank's Law delay

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- Hundreds of u65 dementia patients miss out due to Frank's Law delay

27 Dec 2018



Hundreds of dementia patients in Scotland under the age of 65 have missed out on a year of free personal care after the SNP delayed introducing Frank's Law.

New analysis has found that, at the end of March 2018, there were 867 people below the age threshold being treated for the illness.

Campaigners and opposition politicians had called for the rule change to be brought in from the beginning of April 2018 following the passing of legislation in September 2017.

However, SNP ministers decided only to introduce the changes from 2019, meaning hundreds of patients – many of whom are gravely ill – have had to fund their own care packages in the meantime.

Frank's Law is named after dementia sufferer and former Dundee United footballer Frank Kopel, who died at the age of 65 in 2014, having been diagnosed six years previously.

The SNP consistently refused to introduce the law change to open up free personal care to dementia patients under the age of 65 in the face of strong lobbying from, among others, Frank's wife Amanda.

Eventually, after shadow health secretary Miles Briggs threatened to launch a member's bill to force through the move, the SNP caved.

Analysis of ISD Scotland figures has revealed that in 2017/18 there were 484 dementia patients aged between 60 and 64; a further 245 aged from 55 to 59; and 85 who were 50 to 54.

In addition, 38 were aged between 40 and 49, and 16 patients receiving dementia medication were 39 and under.

**Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:**

“The SNP was dragged kicking and screaming to agree to bring in Frank's Law.

“As soon as the legislation was passed it should have been brought in at the next reasonable opportunity, which would have been April 2018.

“Instead, the nationalists dithered again, and as we can now see that means that hundreds of patients missed out.

“These figures clearly show that, in 2017/18, more than 800 patients aged under 65 were being treated for dementia in Scotland.

“At least if the SNP government had moved swiftly, those people could have caught a break by the time April came around.

“But for many, the SNP’s needless 12-month delay will have been too late.”

**Amanda Kopel said:**

“There have already been under 65s who were denied free personal care because of the repeated excuses about why Frank’s Law couldn’t be implemented until April 2019.

“I realise the wheels of government can turn slowly, but if things had been put in motion long before 2017 by the SNP, and if it had taken the issue seriously, Frank’s Law could have, and would have, been delivered long before now.

“How can you put a price on a person’s life? Sadly, that’s exactly what the SNP has done, but churning out excuse after excuse as to why it wasn’t feasible or affordable.

“I know there have been many people under 65 who have sadly passed away since the announcement in September. They were living in hope, and I am saddened for those who were unable to hang on to see this come into place.”

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## [Police race to over-stretched courts dozens of times each month](#)

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- Police race to over-stretched courts dozens of times each month

26 Dec 2018



Police are forced to attend Scottish courts dozens of times each month to attend a range of 999 calls, new figures have shown.

In the past three years, the force has received 2228 emergency calls from sheriff courts right across the country.

According to the statistics obtained by the Scottish Conservatives through Freedom of Information, there were 885 calls in 2016, 823 last year, and 520 for the first 10 months of 2018.

A variety of crimes were detected at each call-out, including 162 reports of drug-taking and 138 assaults.

Shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said the figures showed Scotland's courts service to be under huge pressure dealing with increasing numbers of cases, particularly after the SNP government began embarking on a courts-closure scheme.

Some bizarre incidents were also contained in the statistics, including reports of an "animals" related incident in Ayr in 2016; a public demonstration in Dumbarton; and a person consuming alcohol in a courtroom in Glasgow.

Last year, Selkirk Sheriff Court was at the centre of two unusual incidents; reports of a "planned shoot/pest control" incident, and a 999 call in relation to "weather".

The true overall figure is likely to be higher as data was not available for all sheriff courts.

**Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:**

"This just shows the kind of pressure our sheriff courts system is under.

"They are constantly being asked to do more with less, and now it emerges these facilities are at the centre of hundreds of 999 calls each year.

"It underlines what a brave job people working at sheriff courts do, and the importance of the system more generally.

"The vast majority of these aren't minor incidents, and put the safety of those in the court building at risk.

"It's vital that both our courts service and police force don't have to continue cutting back so they can do the important job of delivering justice swiftly and safely."

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## [Jackson Carlaw's Christmas message](#)

24 Dec 2018



Below is a Christmas message from Scottish Conservative interim leader

Jackson Carlaw.

“On behalf of the Scottish Conservative party, may I wish everyone a very happy Christmas.

“For most of the last 30 years, my own Christmas tradition has been to host a large family get together at home. However, the bustle, organized chaos and enjoyment of our family festivities has always made me appreciate that for some Christmas can be both lonely and financially stressful.

“So, however we each keep Christmas this year, it is worth looking out for those who are on their own and to donate what we can to support those who will appreciate the difference it can make.

“I also want to pay a special tribute to the staff in the NHS working over Christmas. 2018 has been the year when we marked 70 years of the NHS since its founding in 1948, and whole generations have now been cared for by this unique institution.

“Once again this Christmas, doctors, nurses, porters, cooks, cleaners and volunteers will be at work looking after those of us who are unfortunate enough to be kept in over the festive period.

“As a country, we may have felt divided for much of 2018 – it is the collective effort of our NHS staff, working together, who have shown us the country at its best.

“For those lucky enough not to be working, I hope you too get some much needed rest and time away from the frontline – ready to come back refreshed for the new year.”

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## [Overtime payments to paramedics reach new high](#)

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- Overtime payments to paramedics reach new high

24 Dec 2018



The Scottish Ambulance Service was forced to pay record amounts in overtime costs to paramedics last year, new figures have revealed.

A shortage of staff meant more than £6.3 million was spent paying paramedics

to work extra shifts as pressure intensifies on ambulance workers.

That's an increase of £670,000 in the space of a year, and is the highest figure in the last five years.

Overall in 2017 – including managers, support staff and technicians – the organisation spent almost £11.8 million in overtime – the equivalent of £32,000 a day.

Overtime payments made to ambulance drivers have also doubled since 2013, reaching £38,000 last year.

The rise comes as the Scottish Ambulance Service finds itself under more pressure dealing with an increasing and ageing population, and worsening “turnaround” times at Scotland's major emergency departments.

Staff sickness absence levels remain considerably higher than the national average, while paramedics face constant anti-social behaviour while attending 999 calls.

In the summer, more than 2500 addresses across the country were “red-flagged” – a policy where ambulance staff aren't allowed to attend without a police presence.

The figures were obtained by the Scottish Conservatives through Freedom of Information.

In its response, the Scottish Ambulance Service said it was in the process of training an additional 1000 paramedics over the next five years “to ensure we can continue to provide safe, effective care”.

**Scottish Conservative public health spokeswoman Annie Wells said:**

“Ambulance staff are under huge pressure, and that is increasing according to these figures.

“The fact more than £6 million was spent on overtime just for paramedics last year goes to show just how short-staffed the organisation must be.

“Many staff will be willing to do these additional shifts, but from a health and safety perspective, it's not ideal to be relying on this so heavily.

“It's welcome that the Scottish Ambulance Service is now training so many extra paramedics.

“But clearly years of under-funding and shambolic workforce planning by the SNP government has contributed to this current unacceptable situation.”

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# [Police Scotland set for record number of cop retirements](#)

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- Police Scotland set for record number of cop retirements

23 Dec 2018



Police Scotland is on course for a record number of officer retirements, official figures have shown.

In the first six months of this year, 325 policemen and women left the force after reaching the required number of years served or for medical reasons.

If that trend continues, the single force will have lost 650 police officers by the end of 2018/19.

That's significantly more than the 561 who left last year, and eclipses the high point of 2014/15 when 613 retired.

The Freedom of Information request from the Scottish Conservatives also revealed other Police Scotland staff are likely to leave in record numbers.

Up to September 30, there were 73 retirements, which will reach 146 by the end of the year if trends continue.

That's an increase from 111 last year, which was in itself a Police Scotland record high.

Scottish Conservative legal affairs spokesman Gordon Lindhurst said the record number of departures would place the organisation under even more strain, and could pose new safety risks to communities across the country.

It means, in the past five years, a total of 2631 police officers have retired from duty in Scotland, along with 419 other staff.

**Scottish Conservative legal affairs spokesman Gordon Lindhurst said:**

"This isn't just a large number – with those hundreds of departures will go decades of knowledge and experience.

"That's a priceless commodity for a police force which is finding itself under increasing pressure.

"The SNP government needs to ensure that Police Scotland is not significantly damaged by this loss, and that policing is fit for the challenges we face.

“Under the nationalists there have been cuts to police stations and to vital administration staff, while frontline officers have been dragged off the beat to fill the spaces left.

“We need assurances that there will be enough bobbies on the beat to ensure communities right across the country are safe, and that criminals can be brought to justice swiftly and effectively.”