

[Opioid overdose figures exposes need for new drugs plan](#)

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- Opioid overdose figures exposes need for new drugs plan

14 Dec 2018



Almost 2,600 people were admitted to Scottish hospitals due to an overdose from opioids last year.

The figures, revealed in a Scottish parliamentary written answer to Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary, also highlight that opioid overdose has increased by 17 percent since 2007, meaning that over 26,000 people have been admitted to Scottish hospitals due to an opioid overdose in the last ten years.

The statistics also show that opioid overdose has increased by 75 percent in the last twenty years.

Opioids are a class of drugs that include the illegal drug heroin, synthetic opioids such as fentanyl, and pain relievers available legally by prescription, such as oxycodone (OxyContin®), hydrocodone (Vicodin®), codeine, morphine, and many others.

The Scottish Conservatives have said that this is further evidence of an increasing opioid problem in Scotland that is not currently being tackled effectively.

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary said:

“Opioid use, addiction and overdose is clearly a serious and increasing problem in Scotland.

“The SNP’s plan to tackle illegal drug use and addiction is not working and is simply maintaining dependency.

“The SNP has failed to stop the steady increase of opioid use and almost 2,600 people overdosed and found themselves in hospital last year alone.

“The Scottish Conservative plan to tackle drug addiction would give every problem drug user a Life Plan and would ensure that 20 percent more Scots accessed treatment.

“Our plan would tackle addiction head on and halve the level of drugs deaths in Scotland.

“The SNP is woefully complacent regarding Scotland’s drug use. The problem is getting worse and it is destroying people’s lives.

“The SNP must take action now, focus on rehabilitation and recovery and stop this devastating cycle of drug use, overdose and death.”

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13 Dec 2018



The SNP has been told to focus on domestic responsibilities and end its hypocritical “abuse” of the UK Government.

Nicola Sturgeon has spent much of the last week issuing critical tweets and statements about matters outwith the responsibility of Holyrood, including the delayed vote on the Brexit deal.

This is despite dithering on her own constitutional dilemma for the best part of two years.

And at First Minister’s Questions today, Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw pointed out that even when progress in devolved areas was being made, it was actually due to UK Government policies, not the SNP’s.

He highlighted a tax cut trumpeted by Derek Mackay in yesterday’s budget, £130 of which is thanks to Chancellor Philip Hammond’s decisions, and just 49p due to SNP measures.

Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Expert organisations and even her own budget documents show block grant investment from Westminster is going up.

“The only person who can’t accept this is Nicola Sturgeon.

“Scotland is in the slow lane under the SNP.

“While the UK Chancellor is committing to tax cuts for hardworking families, the nationalists’ policies provide them with enough extra cash for a packet of crisps.

“Instead of governing for Scotland, the First Minister is intent on hurling abuse from the sidelines.

“Stoking up indignation to a delayed vote in Westminster when she’s spent her entire time as First Minister dangling Scotland over the cliff of another independence referendum.

“It’s the double standards and hypocrisy for which this SNP government has become renowned.”

[Tax hikes the SNP doesn't need to impose](#)

12 Dec 2018



The SNP government has been blasted for imposing new tax hikes on Scottish workers when it doesn't need to do so.

Finance secretary Derek Mackay said today he was worsening the tax gulf between Scotland and the rest of the UK by refusing to increase the personal allowance, in stark contrast to his counterpart in Westminster.

It means the divergence which was strongly warned against by business leaders has increased, which risks damaging growth and driving away wealth.

And the SNP's own Fiscal Commission admitted today these changes would “start to affect taxpayer behaviour”, both on how many hours to work and “tax residency decisions”.

Shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said the rises weren't even needed, after the UK Government pledged £950 million in additional spending through the Barnett formula.

After today's budget statement, families right across the country will be worse off in comparison to the UK equivalents.

As of next year, people earning £40,000 will be £130 worse off, increasing to a gap of nearly £500 for those on £45,000.

People making £50,000 will pay £1500 more in tax than their counterparts in the UK.

Despite claims of tax cuts for the low paid, this will equate to a saving of just £20 a year for those earning between £15,000 and £20,000.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“In advance of today’s budget, every business representative group in Scotland had one key ask of the SNP.

“That was to ensure that the tax differential between here and the rest of the UK would not increase.

“But the nationalists have ignored those calls today, penalising hardworking families right across the country.

“It seems the expert warnings that a growing divergence would make it harder to recruit talented people across both the private and public sector have been roundly ignored.

“That’s the price of living in the SNP’s Scotland.

“And yet none of this was necessary – there was absolutely no need for more SNP tax rises.

“UK Chancellor Philip Hammond delivered an additional £950 million in Barnett Consequentials in his last budget.

“The SNP government should have used that instead of further raiding the pockets of Scotland’s workers.”

Only a quarter of drink spiking crimes are detected

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6 Dec 2018



Only a quarter of reported crimes of drink spiking for sexual purposes are being detected, according to the latest figures obtained by the Scottish Conservatives.

The Freedom of Information response shows that 21 crimes of drugging and administering a substance for sexual purpose have been recorded so far this year, however, only 4 of them have been detected.

On the day that Girls Against Spiking has been launched, to campaign for lids on drinks, the Scottish Conservatives have highlighted the disparity between

the figures and stated that the reported crimes could be the 'tip of the iceberg'.

Annie Wells, Scottish Conservative spokesman on public health said:

"It is extremely worrying to see any crimes of drugging for sexual purposes are still occurring year on year, and potentially increasing.

"We know that the level of reporting of these crimes is low, so this could be just the tip of the iceberg.

"Of an even greater concern, is the low level of detection rate for these very serious crimes, which have absolutely devastating effects on the victims.

"Victims must be encouraged to come forward, and these are crimes that must be rooted out across our communities.

"Police Scotland must have the resources it needs in order to catch those who carry out these serious offences."

And, on the launch of Girls Against Spiking:

"I am pleased to see the launch of this very important initiative which has brought together many important stakeholders including the Police and Strathclyde University.

"We need to be looking at a number of measures which can stop drink spiking altogether, one of which is the measure to put plastic lids on drinks in our pubs and clubs, so this a very positive step in the right direction.

"The figures show that a number of crimes relating to drugging for sexual purposes are still occurring year on year, with the detection rates worryingly low.

"Drink spiking has an absolutely devastating effect on victims and I hope that initiatives like Girls Against Spiking can help bring about an urgently needed reduction in the amount of crimes relating to this.

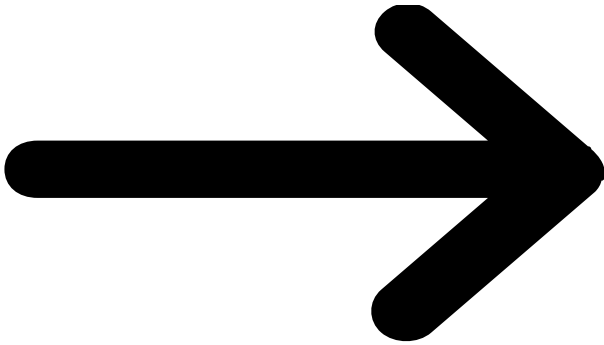
"By working closely together, I believe we can help to root out drink spiking and ensure that people do not have to suffer the awful consequences of these crimes."

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6 Dec 2018



Nicola Sturgeon has been urged to resist hiking up taxes even further on workers and businesses ahead of next week's Holyrood budget.

At First Minister's Questions today, Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said more than enough money had arrived thanks to recent Barnett Formula dividends from Westminster.

As a result, he said the SNP government should heed the advice of business leaders and commit to no further increases in tax.

He highlighted the plight of the Capercaillie restaurant in Stirlingshire, which recently went up for sale after being told its business rates would rocket by £17,000 a year.

And he warned against following Green party policies – something the SNP would need to do to secure their budget support – of creating a new domestic tax for householders.

Instead, Barnett cash announced last month in the UK budget could be used to spare firms and workers any additional penalties.

Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Businesses across Scotland need support, and need it now.

“But faced with devastating increases in rates, how can the First Minister expect them to survive?

“In addition, she can't expect hardworking Scots to keep paying more in taxation.

“The Greens have made it clear, if they are to get the SNP's budget through the Scottish Parliament, they will demand a new taxation on households.

“But that's not what the people of Scotland need or want.

“Nicola Sturgeon has more money thanks to Westminster spending, and that means there is no need for needless tax hikes.

“The cash is there – the SNP now needs to do the right thing by taxpayers.”