

Scots firms hit for £190m by SNP's high-tax agenda

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9 Nov 2018



Businesses in Scotland have been hit by an additional £190 million thanks to the doubling of rates by the SNP.

Latest figures have revealed medium and large firms north of the border have had to cough up the extra cash as a result of changes to the large business supplement.

In 2018/19, it is estimated the total bill for big companies will be £129,252,100, according to the parliamentary written answer by SNP ministers.

But if that rate had been kept on par with the rest of the UK, businesses would only have to pay £64,626,550.

Since 2016/17, the additional burden totals £190,776,450.

Shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart warned the nationalists' high-tax agenda would hurt the economy and reduce job opportunities.

And he warned that SNP plans to consider an "out of town" levy would result in a double-whammy for businesses here.

That proposal has been criticised by leading business organisations in Scotland as adding "complexity, unpredictability and cost to a wide range of businesses that are already working hard to contribute to their local communities".

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said:

"The Scottish economy continues to suffer under this SNP government.

"The SNP has now made Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK for income tax and the highest-taxed part of the UK to run a business.

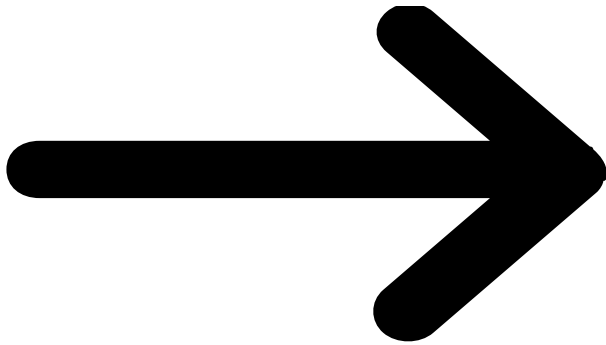
"The SNP has increasingly asked Scottish businesses to pay more and now they are considering an out-of-town levy that will add more cost and more complexity to business taxes.

"It is no wonder that our high streets are struggling and business numbers are falling dramatically across Scotland.

“The SNP must focus on improving the Scottish economy, not imposing unsustainable taxes on Scottish businesses.”

GPs need funding boost now

8 Nov 2018



The SNP government must accelerate pledges for increased funding for family doctors before the GP crisis gets any worse, the Scottish Conservatives said.

Experts have predicted that Scotland could be short of nearly 1000 GPs in coming years unless urgent action is taken.

And today at First Minister’s Questions, Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said a huge budget boost provided by the UK Government could be used to help practices.

Last week, Chancellor Philip Hammond revealed a £550 million Barnett bonus as a result of increased health spending south of the border.

However, Nicola Sturgeon refused to speed up the promise to commit 11 per cent of the NHS budget on primary care, claiming it would “destabilise” the health service.

Investment in GPs is lower in Scotland than other parts of the UK.

Last month, the Scottish Conservatives revealed the spending gap under the SNP has grown to £660 million, while the Royal College of GPs talks about a “long-standing underfunding of GP practices”.

Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“There’s absolutely no doubt that more NHS resource should be going to general practice.

“It’s what the doctors are calling for, and patients are crying out for.

“A larger slice of funding for GPs will help our NHS, keep people out of

hospital, and reduce demand on other critical services.

“But as it stands, they won’t see this for another three years.

“We want to see action now.

“The First Minister needs to use the extra investment from the UK Government to plan properly for the long-term, not squander it on sticking plasters.”

[Convictions down on emergency worker attackers](#)

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7 Nov 2018



The conviction rate of people who have attacked emergency workers has gone down according to new figures from the Scottish Conservatives.

Liam Kerr, Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary will raise this as part of his debate in the Scottish Parliament later today, commending the bravery of emergency workers and condemning their attackers.

Almost 6,000 charges were reported to the Crown Office of the Procurator Fiscal Scotland (COPFS) for attacking emergency workers, including Police, in 2017-18, a very slight increase from the year before, according to a freedom of Information response.

However, over the same period convictions for those who attacked emergency staff have decreased by 530 to 2,790.

As a result only 47 per cent of reports over this period led to a conviction, down by almost 10 percent from 56 per cent in 2016-17.

Mr Kerr will express utter dismay at the high level of continuing attacks against our emergency staff and will call for greater protection for emergency workers and tougher sentencing for those who attack them.

The figures also show that charges proceeded with in court have also increased from 5,502 to 5,528, and charges proceeded with a direct measure have also increased slightly from 246 to 310.

Liam Kerr, Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary said;

“It beggars belief that people would attack our emergency workers, and it must stop.

“It’s clear that we have not yet tackled this problem effectively.

“We must demonstrate our support for our emergency workers by catching, convicting and punishing those who do them harm.

“The Scottish Conservative have published our initial proposals to support emergency workers and to keep them safe.

“Our emergency workers perform vital jobs in our society, in the toughest of situations. We owe them our thanks.”

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7 Nov 2018



Thousands of firms have been wound up over the past year in Scotland, new figures have revealed.

The 2.5 per cent drop since 2017 is proof of the SNP’s “anti-business attitude”, the Scottish Conservatives said.

The official statistics showed there are now 345,915 private sector businesses north of the border.

That compares to 354,745 the year before, a drop of 8830.

The rate of private businesses per head of population is also worse in Scotland than the rest of the UK.

Latest analysis shows the rate north of the border is just 70 per cent of the British total.

Total business turnover is at its lowest level since 2015, while only a handful of local authority areas have seen an increase in business activity.

Shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said a range of SNP policies were contributing to a more hostile environment, not least Scotland becoming the

highest-taxed part of the UK.

He added that, after more than 11 years in government, the nationalists should have done more to encourage entrepreneurship.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Over the years we’ve heard plenty of warm words from the SNP about encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting those who set up their own businesses.

“But those words have come to nothing, and these figures today show the situation is now going backwards.

“This is all the consequence of an SNP government with an anti-business attitude.

“Instead of helping people who want to take risks and go it alone with their business, the nationalists focus on hiking tax and punishing hard work.

“It’s no wonder the number of private business has fallen as a result.”

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7 Nov 2018



Scores of teachers have taken up Nicola Sturgeon’s offer to write to her with concerns about education in Scotland under the SNP.

At First Minister’s Questions last month, she invited teachers to formally submit their concerns after an anonymous staff member made the headlines for saying many were scared to speak out.

Now it has emerged, following a parliamentary question by shadow education secretary Liz Smith, that 120 letters have been received since the offer on October 4.

The First Minister was responding to a question by Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, who’d challenged her to reach out to unearth the extent of work pressures in schools.

Ms Sturgeon told MSPs: "I have read the letter that Ruth Davidson refers to and my message to any teacher is that nobody should feel unable to come to me or to the education secretary to raise concerns at any time. I encourage that, I have always encouraged that and I always will encourage that."

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"The fact so many have taken up the First Minister's offer shows the strength of feeling among teachers right across Scotland.

"These are professionals who have taken time out of their day to express serious concerns about the state of education.

"This is supposed to be a priority area for Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP government.

"How they respond to these scores of representations will reveal just how serious they are about education."