

[Urgent review needed to restore Scotland's gold-standard reputation on subject choice](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Urgent review needed to restore Scotland's gold-standard reputation on subject choice

9 Aug 2018



John Swinney must order an urgent review into the decline in subject choice in Scottish schools, the Scottish Conservatives have said today.

It comes as a study by Professor Jim Scott reveals that the number of S4 pupils studying and passing French has fallen by almost two thirds since Scotland's new curriculum was introduced.

SQA figures released earlier this week confirm that there have been significant declines between 2017 and 2018 in the number of entries for modern languages across National 4, National 5 and Advanced Higher.

The figures also show that there have also been drops in the number of entries for the five main "STEM" subjects (biology, chemistry, computing, maths and physics) in National 4 and Higher.

The falls in entries for these subjects are worse than the decline in overall entries between 2017 and 2018.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"Scottish schools were once known for the broad based education they provided to pupils.

"Under the SNP, that gold-standard reputation is being squandered.

"The decline in subject choice is one of the biggest concerns being raised by parents across Scotland and it's something we've been raising with the SNP for months.

"John Swinney needs to get a grip and order an immediate review into what is going on.

"The real worry is that pupils from poorer areas are losing out the most.

"Nicola Sturgeon has made cutting the attainment gap her key priority – but how can children from poorer backgrounds progress if subjects in key areas

aren't on offer?

"The SNP's response to the fall in standards this summer has been to cancel its own Education Bill designed to boost standards.

"That is despite the fact that John Swinney and Nicola Sturgeon repeatedly said the bill would be flagship legislation designed to raise standards.

"We cannot allow another generation of pupils to be let down by the SNP's complacency."

[500 sick kids diverted since children's ward closure](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- 500 sick kids diverted since children's ward closure

8 Aug 2018



Around 500 sick youngsters have been diverted to a hospital 20 miles away since the controversial closure of a children's ward, health bosses have admitted.

NHS Lothian shut the paediatric facility at St John's Hospital in Livingston to out of hours and in-patients last summer, with no firm plans to reopen it.

Since then, the health board has stated, 500 children have been taken to the Sick Kids Hospital in the centre of Edinburgh.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said the revelation proved the negative impact of the gradual downgrading of hospital services in West Lothian by the SNP government.

And he warned that patients in areas like Perth and Kinross and Renfrewshire would face similar issues with services being removed from those communities.

Papers presented to this month's NHS Lothian board meeting stated: "In the year since the temporary closure of the paediatric inpatient unit at St John's Hospital there had been approximately 500 admissions from there to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, averaging at 1.6 admissions per day."

Previous research by the Scottish Conservatives suggested the number of ambulance journeys from St John's to the Sick Kids trebled in the wake of the closure.

Earlier this year, the party called on the SNP to consider making St John's a paediatric teaching hospital in the hope of safeguarding its future and improving care across central Scotland.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"The situation facing sick children and their parents in West Lothian is completely unacceptable.

"This proves the decision to close the ward to 24/7 admissions, and downgrade the hospital more generally, has had a genuinely negative impact.

"The last thing worried parents should have to face in these situations is a 20-mile trip into the centre of Scotland's capital city when the care was previously provided on their doorstep.

"The SNP needs to wake up to the importance of local services.

"It's not just patients in West Lothian being affected. We could see similar trends occurring in Perth and Kinross and the west of Scotland too with planned reductions there.

"This is yet more evidence that the SNP government simply isn't up to the job of running Scotland's NHS."

[Exam results 'expose SNP complacency' on education](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Exam results 'expose SNP complacency' on education

7 Aug 2018



SNP complacency on education has been "exposed" after a fall in exam pass rates across several key areas was revealed today.

The Scottish Conservatives said "major issues" at National 4 and 5 level proves the nationalist government "simply isn't up to the job" of improving attainment across the country.

The statistics revealed National 4 attainment rate fell from 92.8 per cent last year to 91.1 per cent.

Those gaining A, B and Cs at National 5 dropped by more than two per cent to

77.4 per cent.

And A-C attainment rate at Higher level reduced slightly to 76.8 per cent from 2017.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has repeatedly said education is her top priority in government.

However, Scotland continues to struggle in comparison to youngsters in other countries, and today's results confirmed a decrease across key subjects like English.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"Young people right across Scotland, and their teachers, should be congratulated on their efforts and achievements.

"And for those who didn't get the results they wanted, it's important they are pointed to the many other opportunities that lie ahead.

"But there's no escaping the fact that, for a government which claims its priority is education, these are disappointing statistics.

"There has been no improvement in overall attainment across the board and these statistics confirm there are still major issues about the mix between National 4 and National 5 qualifications.

"That's down to decisions this SNP government has taken, and exposes the complacency it has shown towards education.

"We've warned for years that the SNP simply isn't up to the job of pushing Scottish schools back up the international league tables. These statistics confirm that."

[Someone injured every hour in Scotland's mental health wards](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Someone injured every hour in Scotland's mental health wards

30 Jul 2018



A person sustains an injury at a mental health unit in Scotland every hour, new figures obtained by the Scottish Conservatives have revealed.

According to the research, nearly 24 incidents a day are recorded in facilities right across the country.

It means, in 2017/18, there were 8519 incidents resulting in injury among staff, patients and even some visitors.

That compares to 9101 the previous year, and 8721 in 2015/16, bringing the three-year total to 26,341.

Scottish Conservative mental health spokeswoman Annie Wells said the statistics should help renew focus on improving mental health care in Scotland, creating a better environment for vulnerable patients and healthcare workers.

According to the Freedom of Information requests, incidents ranged from assaults and accidents such as falls and trips, to substance abuse and issues with absconding and patient transport.

Instances involving burns, hazardous liquids and infection control also occurred.

Scotland's largest health board, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, noted the most incidents last year (3232) followed by NHS Lothian (1679) and NHS Grampian (1335).

Scottish Conservative mental health spokeswoman Annie Wells said:

"Everyone accepts that mental health wards can be extremely challenging both for patients and staff and, as such, incidents involving injury are bound to occur.

"But at the same time, more clearly needs to be done to reduce the thousands which occur each year.

"All political parties agree that mental health deserves parity of esteem with physical health.

"But if that is to be the case, these units have to become safer for workers and patients, and clearly that will take a great deal of effort and focus.

"That requires the Scottish Government speaking to staff, experts and relevant charities to see what improvements can be made to reduce injuries in this vital part of our NHS."

[Pressure growing on Leonard to end](#)

[silence on anti-Semitism](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Pressure growing on Leonard to end silence on anti-Semitism

28 Jul 2018



Pressure is growing on Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard to end his silence after another one of his councillors was embroiled in a row over anti-Semitism.

Scottish Labour councillor Mary Lockhart claimed that Jewish newspapers that criticised her party's position on anti-Semitism could be working on behalf of Mossad.

It came after Dundee councillor George McIrvine was criticised for sharing a post on Facebook that made reference to the Rothschild banking dynasty.

It's the latest in a series of rows involving the Labour party, who are still refusing to accept the International Holocaust's Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism and all the accompanying examples in full and without amendment.

Scottish Conservative MP Paul Masterton has called on Richard Leonard to finally end his silence on the abuse emanating from his party towards Jewish people.

Scottish Conservative MP for East Renfrewshire, Paul Masterton said:

"The anti-Semitic rhetoric that has been coming from the Scottish Labour party has been appalling, yet Richard Leonard has refused to break his silence.

"This week we once again had one of his councillors pedalling ignorant and horrific views on Jewish people, revealing the deep rooted problems that Scottish Labour have on this issue.

"And yet despite this we have seen no action from Richard Leonard to show that he is either taking these issues seriously, or that he is trying to rid his party of these disgusting views.

"Every day that goes by without Leonard speaking out against this abuse is another day that this shameful episode will continue to dog his party.

"For the sake of the Jewish community and his party, Richard Leonard must come out of hiding and tackle this problem head on."