

# [Final SPA pay out totals over £740k in McBride case](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Final SPA pay out totals over £740k in McBride case

28 Jul 2018



The total amount paid out by the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) in the Fiona McBride case was over £740,000, the Scottish Conservatives can reveal.

The SPA were forced to give the fingerprints expert £415,227 in compensation for ten years of lost earnings and pensions contributions when the Supreme Court ruled that she had been unfairly dismissed following her sacking after the Marion Ross murder case.

But information obtained through a Freedom of Information request revealed that in addition to this the SPA spent a total of £328,138 in relation to the court case and appeals.

This included £112,519 on legal expenses for the appeal at the Supreme Court, and the £80,000 they were ordered to pay of Fiona McBride's legal fees.

**Scottish Conservative MSP and convenor of the Justice Committee, Margaret Mitchell said:**

“This is a staggering amount of money to be spent on one single court case.

“Nearly three quarters of a million pounds of taxpayers' money has been wasted fighting this legal case, and it's simply not good enough.

“Not only did the SPA wrongfully get rid of a competent and professional employee, they then spent huge amounts as they persisted to fight a losing battle in the courts.

“This was one of the most damning abuses of power in the long line of adverse stories regarding the management of the SPA.

“Public money cannot be allowed to be wasted in such an awful manner ever again.”

The FOI regarding the legal costs can be found here:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SPA-Fiona-McBride.pdf>

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# Scottish Conservatives launch pharmacy plan

27 Jul 2018



The Scottish Conservative have today launched their five-point plan for enhancing the capabilities of pharmacies.

At a visit to Dears Pharmacy in Edinburgh, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs spoke about the party's plans to make pharmacies a key partner in primary health care.

It comes during a GP crisis in Scotland that has seen many general practises become understaffed and overwhelmed by increased demand.

The aim of the plan is to use pharmacies to ease the pressure on GPs by allowing them to become trained prescribers, and to allow them to treat more common ailments.

There is also a proposal to extend the opening times of pharmacies to provide more round the clock care, with the potential for 24-hour pharmacies being explored.

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

“Under this SNP Government a crisis has developed in our GP services, and we need to start looking at ways to alleviate the pressure.

“Pharmacies are in an ideal position to help, and that’s why we want to see them become a key partner in primary health care.

“By increasing their capabilities and allowing them to become trained prescribers we can allow pharmacies to treat common ailments more speedily.

“And by exploring the introduction of extended hours for pharmacies, including in 24-hour supermarkets, we can help provide immediate help around the clock.

“This would not only take pressure off our GPs, but also provide better patient care – something that is key to this plan.”

**A copy of the plan can be found here:**

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Pharmacies-Plan.pdf>

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# [Scottish Conservatives hold first meeting of group aiming to make politics more accessible](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Scottish Conservatives hold first meeting of group aiming to make politics more accessible

26 Jul 2018



The Scottish Conservatives have today held the first meeting of their disability group, which aims to get more disabled people involved in politics.

The Scottish Conservative Disability Group is chaired by Jeremy Balfour MSP, and was formed as part of the party's commitment to making politics more accessible.

It follows the Scottish Conservatives support of Inclusion Scotland's 'Access to Politics Charter', which involves supporting disabled people's participation in every aspect of the party's activities.

The members of the group include Scottish Conservative politicians from around the country who are disabled and want to see progress in this area.

**Scottish Conservative MSP for the Lothians Jeremy Balfour MSP said:**

"I am delighted to be able to chair the first meeting of the Scottish Conservative Disability Group.

"Disabled people make up one in five of the population, so it is important that we do all we can to help them get involved in politics.

"For us, that means giving disabled members of the Scottish Conservatives a forum to give their views so we can better support and encourage them to take a more prominent role.

"The group will also be a platform to ensure the views of disabled people are considered when party policy is being developed.

"Over the coming months we look forward to taking more steps to help make politics more accessible."

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# Breaches of home curfews on the rise

17 Jul 2018



The number of criminals breaching home detention curfews rose last year, with more than one in five offenders now being recalled to jail.

Research by the Scottish Conservatives has revealed, of the 1434 individuals granted the early releases from prison, 300 breached the order.

That compares to 241 in 2016/17 and 222 the year before that, the Scottish Prison Service figures revealed.

It follows reports today that 15 offenders who breached curfew orders, despite being recalled, have now been on the run for five years or more.

In one case, the Daily Mail reported, a criminal has been unlawfully at large for more than a decade.

The SNP government has been under increasing pressure on the monitoring of offenders after the jailing of killer James Wright, who murdered father-of-three Craig McClelland last year.

At the time of the attack, he'd been unlawfully at large for six months, having breached the terms of his release from prison for previous convictions.

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

“The fact an increasing number of criminals are breaching home detention curfews suggests these decisions are being taken too lightly.

“Now more than a fifth of these offenders breach the terms of their release, which suggests they should never have been set free in the first place.

“If sentences were of sufficient length, and the rehabilitation infrastructure vastly improved, the integration of these individuals would be far more successful.

“But what we see now is a soft-touch approach from the SNP government which is spreading right across the justice system.

“Not only are more criminals breaching these orders, but some who are can get away with this for years on end.

“That risks public safety, and is a gross insult to victims of crime who've already gone through enough.”

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# Ruth helps unveil new Google Garage

16 Jul 2018



Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson has emphasised the importance of digital skills education at the opening of a new facility in Edinburgh.

She helped unveil the new Google Digital Garage in the Capital today, saying such resources would help people of all ages improve their skills, and fill gaps in the technology jobs market across the country.

The facility will be accompanied by a digital skills training programme for people living in and around Glasgow as part of a major investment from the global firm.

It will enable people to access free coaching in creating a CV, learning more online skills, and providing information about internet security.

## **Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:**

“Too many people still see technology as something beyond their reach – like learning a foreign language or mastering a musical instrument.

“But in truth, with support it can be picked up and improved upon very quickly.

“Finding people with the right technical skills is something employers say is their single biggest challenge, and one that is increasing.

“Yet, at the same time, we know one in five people in Scotland lack even the most basic digital skills.

“So we have a skills gap and people who’d love to work in the sector but don’t currently have the sufficient skills.

“That simply can’t go on. Tech and the digital economy is going to be vital if we are going to achieve economic growth in Scotland over the coming years.

“We all know the digital revolution is upon us and is only going to quicken up.

“It’s by working together – and exercising power responsibly – that we can make sure everyone benefits.”