

[Poll shows Scots think NHS has deteriorated under SNP](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Poll shows Scots think NHS has deteriorated under SNP

24 Jun 2018



A poll conducted by the Sunday Times Scotland has shown that 46% of Scots believe that the NHS has deteriorated under the stewardship of SNP.

The Panelbase poll showed that a fifth believe that it has stayed the same since the SNP took power in 2007, while only a quarter believe it has improved.

The Scottish Conservatives have said that the poll is yet further evidence of the SNP's dismal management of the NHS, and that Scots are looking for change and for new ideas and fresh leadership for the NHS in Scotland.

They also highlighted that many of the current problems stemmed from Nicola Sturgeon's decision as health secretary, such as to cut the number of student nurses has led to the quadrupling of the number of unfilled Scottish nursing posts.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs MSP said:

"This polling is a real insight into the dismal view many Scots have of the SNP's stewardship of our NHS.

"The SNP have presided over a workforce crisis in our NHS, a crisis in social care services and increasingly seem to have no vision on how to build a sustainable and preventative focused NHS for the future.

"And it is now clear that many of the challenges and problems which have built up in the Scottish NHS in recent years have been down to the poor decisions taken by Nicola Sturgeon whilst she was health secretary.

"After 11 years of SNP mismanagement it is clear that Scots are looking for change and for new ideas and fresh leadership for our Scottish NHS.

"Building a sustainable NHS needs to be the priority for everyone. The Scottish Conservatives are determined to provide the resources and future vision to meet Scotland's future health and social care needs."

[Councils forced to dig even deeper into their reserves](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Councils forced to dig even deeper into their reserves

22 Jun 2018



Local authorities have been forced to dig even deeper into their cash reserves in the last year, just to fund day-to-day services.

A Scottish Government report has revealed that, in 2017/18, councils spent £126 million from their respective rainy day funds.

That's a significant increase from the previous year, when £79 million worth of reserves were used.

The number of local authorities resorting to these measures has also increased over that 12-month period, from 19 to 24.

This week's official paper predicted councils would need to call on an additional £113 million worth of reserves during this current year to stay on an even keel.

The Scottish Conservatives said local authorities were being forced to this "last resort" measure by SNP government funding cuts.

It also means council reserves are dwindling, with auditors saying by the end of the year the total amount will have dropped to under £1 billion among 32 councils.

Across the country, some councils are dipping into their savings far more than others.

Last year, Aberdeenshire spent 60 per cent of their reserves, with Midlothian using 52 per cent.

Others didn't use any at all.

If the general trend continues, reserves across all 32 of Scotland's local authorities will be wiped out within 14 years.

Scottish Conservative local government spokesman Alexander Stewart said:

"Councils are increasingly dipping into their rainy day fund, and that's a direct consequence of SNP budget cuts.

“It’s not like these reserves are being used for landmark projects, it’s a last resort to keep day-to-day services going.

“It’s not something that can continue – mathematically this option will disappear in little more than a decade if current trends continue.

“Under an SNP government, the financial wellbeing of Scotland’s 32 local authorities has deteriorated alarmingly.

“What’s worse is that, while these reserves are being used, services only appear to be getting worse.”

[SNP must follow UK and increase legal protection for police dogs](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- SNP must follow UK and increase legal protection for police dogs

21 Jun 2018



Following the UK Government’s decision to increase legal protection for police dogs and service animals, Police Dog Finn and his handler PC Dave Wardell have, today, visited the Scottish Parliament.

PC Wardell has been campaigning for ‘Finn’s Law’ which calls for a new offence of harming or killing a service animal since Finn suffered life threatening injuries during an arrest in 2016.

The UK Government, last week, announced its support for Finn’s law and has published the Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Bill which will remove a section of the current law of self-defence, and increase maximum sentences for animal cruelty offences to five years in prison.

Liam Kerr is calling for the Scottish Government to follow suit and adequately punish those who harm trained animals like dogs and horses working with the police, fire service, military or other public services. It could also cover assistance animals like guide dogs.

Liam Kerr’s petition to change the law to protect police dogs and other service animals now has 32,250 signatures.

Currently it is not a specific crime to injure or kill a police dog in Scotland. Offenders who harm service animals such as dogs or horses can only

be charged under a patchwork of laws unfit for this purpose.

Scottish Conservative MSP Liam Kerr said;

“It is my great pleasure to welcome PD Finn and PC Dave Wardell to the Scottish Parliament and celebrate the publication of the UK Animal Welfare (Service Animals) Bill.

“Since Finn was viciously attacked, PC Wardell has campaigned tirelessly to secure a change in the law that will protect and support all of our service animals.

“It is a great step forward that this law has been published in England and Wales, but Scotland must now catch up and act with similar speed to increase legal protection for police dogs and service animals.

“In Scotland, hundreds of service animals work with Police Scotland to keep us safe.

“They all work with the same dedication to duty as the men and women in our Police force, but our laws don’t protect them the same way and currently, the law views a Police animal as little more than property.

“There is tremendous public support for this campaign and the petition to change the law to protect police dogs now has over 32,000 signatures.

“The SNP must follow the lead of the UK Government, listen to the thousands of voices calling for greater protection and status for service animals and change the law now.”

PC Dave Wardell said:

“It is amazing to see the depth of support and commitment to change in Scotland.

“All service animals deserve the utmost respect for the invaluable service they provide every day. Finally recognising this and providing them with protection in law will be a fitting legacy for Finn and all those brave animals who, like Finn have served their community so loyally, and those who still do.

“I thank Liam Kerr MSP for taking Finns Law to Scotland and it is my pleasure that we have been able to visit today to cement the two campaigns for a shared goal.”

[SNP ‘rigging the stats and lowering](#)

[the bar' on education](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- SNP 'rigging the stats and lowering the bar' on education

21 Jun 2018



The SNP has been accused of lowering standards of education by assessing pupils as having attained required standards – even when they've failed their course.

Earlier this week the SNP government hailed its own report showing attainment in literacy and numeracy had exceeded 90 per cent.

However, at First Minister's Questions today, Ruth Davidson revealed the measure by which children are assessed has been changed.

The Scottish Conservative leader pointed out that it used to be the case that a pupil would have to pass a course in order to obtain a literacy and numeracy achievement.

Now, according to guidance set out earlier this week, a youngster can achieve a pass at National 4 level by only succeeding in a single unit.

Examples of this include a unit at National 4 English where a child can "listen to and watch TV ads".

Literacy and numeracy used to be measured by the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), which has now been cancelled, having last been published in May 2017.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"The SNP has spent the week patting itself on the back over literacy and numeracy rates.

"But under its own new rules, a pupil is deemed to have met those required standards of attainment, even if they fail English and maths.

"The First Minister keeps telling us she wants to boost standards.

"But instead, the SNP has cancelled surveys, rigged the stats and lowered the bar for literacy and numeracy.

"It's no wonder parents don't trust the system.

"The SNP has been utterly complacent on education, despite Nicola Sturgeon claiming it is her top priority.

“It is ludicrous for the SNP government to change the bar so literacy rates are met without pupils being equipped to spell properly, or numeracy achieved without pupils being equipped to add properly.

“The nationalists aren’t interested in restoring Scottish education to levels of global excellence, and instead want to massage the statistics to make themselves look good.

“It’s a disgraceful approach which is harming the prospects of generations of young people.”

[Holyrood Committee slams SNP’s economic performance](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Holyrood Committee slams SNP’s economic performance

20 Jun 2018



A cross-party Holyrood committee will (today) publish a damning review of Scotland’s economic performance under the SNP and call for an urgent review of economic strategy.

The influential Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee has unanimously agreed a report which recognises that economic growth in Scotland under the SNP is significantly below growth rates in the UK economy as a whole and is falling far behind historical growth rates in Scotland.

The report “Scotland’s Economic Performance” also concludes that “levels of GDP growth are marginal, productivity low and wages are stagnant”.

The Holyrood Committee highlights that “the future will be equally challenging given the independent Scottish Fiscal Commission’s revised forecast of lower tax revenues, of as much as £1.7 billion, and already low GDP growth has been revised downwards to less than 1%.”

The Committee recommends that in order to reverse the decline in Scotland’s economy “the Scottish Government must use all of the levers at its disposal to bring a sharper focus on growing the economy” starting by reviewing and updating the Economic Strategy “as a matter of urgency.”

Dean Lockhart, Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary said:

“This is a savage critique of the SNP’s economic record over the past 11 years.

“This highly respected cross-party Committee has concluded that the SNP has significantly failed to meet all of their own economic targets.

“The SNP likes to blame Brexit and the UK Government for economic problems experienced in Scotland but this report once and for all highlights that the SNP have all the powers necessary to realise Scotland’s economic potential.

“But this is simply not happening. The Committee clearly reports that the Scottish economy under the SNP has been under-performing for 11 years and that urgent action must now be taken to reverse this decline.

“The economic incompetence of the SNP will directly result in less spending being available in vital areas including schools, hospitals and roads.

“It is now time for the SNP to listen to this important Committee Report and urgently change economic policy for the sake of Scotland.”