

NHS deal for Scotland

17 Jun 2018



Ruth Davidson has today welcomed the UK government's decision to invest an extra £20 billion in the NHS.

The deal will mean the Scottish Government will receive a £2bn windfall to support health care in Scotland.

The Scottish Conservatives are today demanding that Nicola Sturgeon make it clear that every penny of the extra funding goes to health care in Scotland.

Today's announcement follows a speech by Ruth Davidson in Glasgow earlier this month in which she called on a major new investment package.

Across the UK, the deal provides an annual increase of 3.4% guaranteed until 2023.

Based on current plans, this announcement will provide the Scottish Government with additional Barnett funding worth £2bn in real terms by 2023/24.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"It is hugely welcome that the UK Conservative Government has provided this long-term funding plan for our NHS."

"As we celebrate the fact that our NHS is 70 years young, it's important we look to how we deliver the sustainable health and social care communities across Scotland will require in the future."

"I believe the best days for our NHS are ahead of it – this financial commitment by the Conservatives will let our health care professionals work to build a stronger, safer, and better NHS for all of us."

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs added:

"Nicola Sturgeon must now make it clear that every penny of the extra cash she receives thanks to this UK government action goes on health care here in Scotland."

"Too often in the past the SNP has failed to meet extra investment in the rest of the UK. The SNP must not be allowed to do that again. It is time for our NHS to come first."

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The SNP has yet to invest a single penny of its trumpeted Digital Growth Fund, more than a year after it was announced at the party's conference.

In March 2017, Nicola Sturgeon told nationalist delegates that her government would set up the £36 million fund to "meet the upfront costs of digital skills training".

However, following a parliamentary question from Scottish Conservative MSP Rachael Hamilton, ministers admitted no money has yet been delivered.

Economy secretary Keith Brown stated: "No loans have been issued as of yet."

He added that the first phase – £2 million worth of loans – were due to be allocated at some point in June, but failed to detail exactly when.

The SNP's failure to deliver cash follows controversy over its Scottish Growth Scheme, which has so far handed out just £25 million in two years, considerably less than the £500 million pledged.

Scottish Conservative MSP Rachael Hamilton said:

"This is just another example of the SNP setting out investment plans to grab the headlines, then failing when it comes to delivery.

"Scotland's digital skills sector will have been encouraged by this announcement but, more than a year on, are yet to see a penny.

"The SNP government needs to explain what has happened to this cash, and why it's taking so long to reach its destination.

"Tens of millions of pounds would go a long way to helping turn around Scotland's economy, and would also help the nationalists shed the reputation of being an anti-business government.

"Instead, another promise has been broken, and companies in need of support continue to suffer."

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Nicola Sturgeon is being challenged to admit that separation from the UK would mean “austerity max” for Scotland – following the publication of a new report today on the cost of her independence blueprint.

The report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies concludes that the SNP’s plans would lead to serious cuts to public spending for as long as 18 years after independence.

The report says it is “inconsistent” to claim that the SNP’s plans “do not amount to austerity but the UK Government’s current policy does”.

Yet, following the publication of her “Growth Commission,” Nicola Sturgeon has refused to admit that her plans would reduce spending on schools and the NHS.

The Scottish Conservatives are therefore calling on Nicola Sturgeon today to admit the obvious – that independence comes at a huge cost.

The report makes clear that extra cuts would be required under independence – but that the SNP Commission “does not say where the axe would fall”.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Nicola Sturgeon wants us to believe that independence would come cost-free. Yet this impartial expert report makes clear it would be austerity max for as long as 18 years.

“That is the staggering price the Nationalists are prepared to pay for their obsession with breaking up the United Kingdom.”

“Nicola Sturgeon needs to come clean. She should simply admit it: independence comes at a huge cost. Until she does, nobody should believe a word she says.”

“This report only underlines why it is so important that we oppose a second referendum on independence. We don’t want to go back to yet more insecurity and turmoil – Scotland needs to go forward to a more secure, prosperous

future as part of the UK.”

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Farmers forced to borrow more

14 Jun 2018



Farmers are borrowing more and having to pay staff less, according to figures released by the Scottish Government.

According to ‘Agricultural Facts and Figures’ published today, agricultural borrowing has doubled in the last ten years, capital investment has stayed the same, and agricultural workers are earning £1560 less on average compared to last year.

The figures show that farm borrowing has almost doubled from £1.38 billion to £2.28 billion between 2007 to 2017, while capital investment has stayed the same at £210m.

This demonstrates that farmers are investing much less in their machinery and equipment, the Scottish Conservatives said, while still having to borrow ever-increasing sums to remain viable.

Scottish Conservative shadow environment secretary Donald Cameron said:

“The scale of the increase in farm borrowing, coupled with the lack of investment, clearly demonstrates the impossible situation farmers now find themselves in.

“The reality is that the SNP has no interest in rural Scotland.

“Its central-belt agenda has ignored and undermined farmers for too long, and this important sector is now stuck in a vicious circle, the effects of which will impact the wider rural economy too.

“With farmers still struggling with debts relating to the CAP payment fiasco caused by the SNP Government several years ago, they have been left feeling deeply uncertain of their future.

“This is leading directly to a lack of capital investment and farmers are – quite sensibly – reluctant to take on agricultural workers if they are struggling to pay them.

“The lack of any sort of plan from the SNP on farming support post-Brexit is also a major contributor to the fact that capital investment in farming is simply stagnating.”