

## [Drought affects millions of hectares of farmland in China](#)

Drought has affected 2.67 million hectares of farmland in China due to lack of rainfall in the country's north and northeast, according to latest official statistics.

As of May 27, 120,000 people and 500,000 livestock faced shortage of drinking water as a result of the drought, said Chen Lei, minister of water resources, at a video conference of the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters.

Authorities have dispatched 15 work teams to help heavily-affected regions, said Chen, who is also deputy head of the headquarters.

About 5.5 million people have joined the fight against drought, drilling wells or working on pumping stations to irrigate over 4 million hectares of farmland, according to the minister.

He demanded priority be given to ensuring drinking water safety for rural and urban residents.

---

## [Press Release: EU fisheries controls: more efforts needed, say Auditors](#)

[Download PDF](#)

---

## [Scotland's repairs and maintenance woes revealed](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Scotland's repairs and maintenance woes revealed

30 May 2017



Damning statistics have revealed the true extent of Scotland's NHS, education

and building maintenance woes. Research has shown that a total of £1.3 billion should have been spent dealing with the likes of crumbling schools, potholed roads and mouldy hospital walls over the last few years.

- An annual report on NHS estates showed that for 2015, there was a backlog of £898 million for maintenance and repairs.
- A huge amount was spent on repairs for schools, with a total of £300 million and £150 million being spent between 2016-17 and 2018-19 respectively.
- FOI data obtained by the Scottish Conservatives also showed that Canals Scotland has 84 projects they deem to be 'critical infrastructure backlog' and the total estimated cost is £74m.
- The issues of school infrastructure was furtherly shown in the School Estates Supplementary Dataset 2014, in which it was revealed that one in five schools are not at the standard required and 15 per cent of primary schools are in either a "poor" or "bad condition".
- Calum Steele, general secretary of the Scottish Police Federation, complained about a lack of investment in infrastructure leaving Police Scotland with a "crumbling police estate".

With obvious building infrastructure issues right across Scotland, the Scottish Conservatives are calling for the SNP to focus more of its attention addressing these worries.

**Scottish Conservative infrastructure spokesman Liam Kerr said:**

"It's clear that the SNP has completely taken its eye off the ball in the midst of its obsession with independence.

"It's a real worry that so many schools and hospitals are still not up to the standard required.

"Among many other things, the SNP government really ought to explain why Scotland's main roads and motorways are in a worse condition than those down south.

"These statistics have to be a wakeup call for the SNP, and it's high time they realised that people don't want a government relentlessly obsessed with breaking up Britain, they want a government that shows a drive and determination to improve standards all over Scotland."

---

Scotland's NHS, education and infrastructure have a repairs and maintenance backlog of at least £1.3 billion.

**Canals Scotland has a critical infrastructure backlog of £74 million:**

- New FOI data obtained by the Scottish Conservatives shows that Canals Scotland has 84 projects they deem to be 'critical infrastructure backlog' and the total estimated cost is £74m.
- The list of repairs includes 8 seepage or leakage repairs, including on

the Caledonian Canal, Forth & Clyde Canal and the Crinan Canal; it also includes a sewage pump near Kilsyth; and repairs to the iconic Avon aqueduct near Linlithgow.

**The latest figures show the NHS has a maintenance backlog costs of nearly £900 million:**

- The annual report on NHS estates, for 2015, shows a backlog of £898 million, over £100 million more than the £797 million reported in 2014.
- The maintenance backlog expenditure requirement is defined as the base cost required to bring those parts of the existing estate which are not currently in an unsatisfactory condition back into a satisfactory condition
- 44 per cent of the NHS repairs were deemed to be of high or significant risk, prompting patient safety fears (Scottish Government, *Annual State of NHS Scotland Assets and Facilities Report for 2015*, July 2016, [link](#); *Ibid 2014*, March 2015, [link](#)).

**Scotland's colleges have a facilities repair bill of over £300m:**

- A submission to the Scottish Government by College Scotland revealed that repairs they deemed a 'necessity' cost a total of £280 million in capital spending and £105 million between 2016-17 and 2018-19.

**40 per cent of Scotland's roads are unacceptable, and councils spend £40m a year on potholes**

- **Nearly 40 per cent of council-maintained roads are beneath 'acceptable' condition.** Only 63 per cent of council-maintained roads are in a condition described as 'acceptable' (Audit Scotland, *Maintaining Scotland's Roads*, 4 August 2016, p5, [link](#)).
- **Scottish councils spend £38 million a year on potholes.** New data from FOI requests by the Scottish Conservative show that the last available statistics show spending of £38.04 million across Scotland on potholes.
- **Scotland's main roads and motorways are in a 'significantly' worse condition than England's.** Audit Scotland data shows that the entire network has deteriorated in the past four years, and the worst decline has been in motorways and main trunk roads which are the responsibility of the Scottish Government. 13 per cent were assessed as being in poor condition and potentially needing maintenance, compared to only 4 per cent in England. Highways England spends nearly three times more per kilometre on maintaining main trunk roads than Transport Scotland (Audit Scotland, *Maintaining Scotland's Roads*, 4 August 2016, p27, [link](#)).

**Scotland's police are using cars held together with 'duct tape and cable ties':** Calum Steele, general secretary of the Scottish Police Federation, said decades of under-investment in infrastructure has left the force with a 'crumbling police estate' and that 'we have police vehicles held together with duct tape and cable ties. Duct tape and cable ties, that is what is keeping our fleet together on the road right now because we have no money.

This is the reality of no money to invest in the estate of the police service of Scotland.” (*The Telegraph*, 14 October 2016, [link](#)).

### **Nearly one in five Scottish schools are not at the expected standard – and SNP repaired-buildings are already showing problems**

- **15 per cent of primary schools are in a ‘poor’ or ‘bad’ condition.** There is huge variation within that:
  - o In Moray, 80 per cent of primary schools are in a ‘poor’ or ‘bad’ condition
  - o In the Borders, 37 per cent of primary schools are in a ‘poor’ or ‘bad’ condition
- **21 per cent of secondary schools are in a ‘poor’ or ‘bad’ condition**
  - o In Moray, the proportion is 75 per cent
  - o In Edinburgh, the proportion is 22 per cent
  - o In Dumfries and Galloway, the proportion is 37.5 per cent
- **17 per cent of primary schools have ‘poor’ or ‘bad’ suitability** – which is a wider measure of the how well the school estate meets the needs of the school.
- **21 per cent of secondary schools have ‘poor’ or ‘bad’ suitability.**
  - o In Aberdeen City, the number is 66.7 per cent
  - o In Highland, the number is 44.8 per cent
- **More than one in ten schools the SNP rebuilt or refurbished are already in sub-standard condition.** 6 of the 44 schools recorded as newly built or refurbished in Scottish Government statistics have already been classified as ‘poor’ in either the condition of the building or the suitability for the school. This means that the school is ‘Showing major defects and/or not operating adequately’ or ‘Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally’.
- **Only half of the schools recorded as newly built or refurbished had a ‘good’ report for both condition and suitability.** Only a ‘good’ rating means there are no problems – every other rating indicates some degree of issue or deterioration. (Scottish Government, *School Estates Supplementary Dataset 2016*, December 2016, [link](#))

---

## **[Comblent l’écart entre les politiques et la réalité : Rapport sur les droits fondamentaux 2017 de la FRA](#)**

On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European

Council of its intention to leave the EU by...

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has put in place some of the highest common asylum standards in the world. And in the past two years, European migration policy has advanced in leaps and...

'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 On 25 March 2017,...

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country, the EU has imposed restrictive measures against the Russian Federation. Overview...

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivered his annual State of the Union speech at the European Parliament on 14 September 2016, just two days ahead of the informal meeting of 27...

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28. Any European country that respects the principles of liberty,...

---

## [Comblent l'écart entre les politiques et la réalité : Rapport sur les droits fondamentaux 2017 de la FRA](#)

On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the EU by...

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has put in place some of the highest common asylum standards in the world. And in the past two years, European migration policy has advanced in leaps and...

'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 On 25 March 2017,...

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country, the EU has imposed restrictive measures against the Russian Federation.Overview...

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivered his annual State of the Union speech at the European Parliament on 14 September 2016, just two days ahead of the informal meeting of 27...

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28.Any European country that respects the principles of liberty,...