

Dugdale challenged to condemn Jones' comments on Barnett formula

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Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale has been challenged to disown comments from Carwyn Jones' that he is looking to scrap the Barnett Formula.

The Welsh First Minister said Labour would scrap the way that funding is distributed to the devolved nations if elected in Thursday's general election.

The Scottish Labour manifesto relied on the Barnett formula to fund its spending promises, with the UK party's manifesto also promising huge spending increases in Scotland based on Barnett.

The Conservatives have explicitly promised to keep the Barnett formula, and have challenged Labour to condemn the comments from Mr Jones.

Paul Masterton, Scottish Conservative candidate in East Renfrewshire, said:

"Kezia Dugdale has paraded herself as the defender of the Barnett formula.

"Yet now we learn her colleagues elsewhere in the UK are actively plotting to get rid of it, at huge cost to Scotland.

"It is a staggering u-turn and shows, once again, you cannot trust Labour with the Union.

"She has gone silent on this since Mr Jones spoke out last night. It isn't good enough.

"She must condemn his comments and make it crystal clear that she has a commitment from Jeremy Corbyn that this is not Labour party policy."

Scottish Labour's manifesto relied on Barnett to fund its spending promises:

- Labour will extend the current provision of free school meals to all primary school children in England, paid for by removing the VAT exemption for private schools. Scotland would benefit from the Barnett consequential of this policy, which would allow it to be replicated here. (p.42)

- A Labour government will give councils in England extra funding next year – and Scotland will benefit financially (p.84)
- Labour’s pledge to recruit 10,000 more police officers to work on community beats in England and Wales will mean Scotland will benefit from an investment of £70 million. (p.76)
- A Labour government will halt cuts to fire services in England and Wales, and recruit 3,000 new firefighters – investment which would mean a boost to Scotland’s valued emergency services (p.79)
- The arts pupil premium we will introduce for every primary school in England – a £160 million a year boost for schools – will mean more money for the Scottish government to invest in arts education. (p.93)

UK Labour’s manifesto promised huge spending increases in Scotland based on Barnett:

- The Scottish Parliament will receive a huge funding increase from our policies, and massive numbers of Scots will benefit from our plans in areas reserved to Westminster (p.104).
- Labour said that £6.1bn would be released for the devolved nations in Barnett consequential.

Kezia Dugdale has previously said that scrapping the Barnett formula would lead to £4 billion in cuts and could cost 138,000 jobs

- “Whether it’s the Tories or the SNP who set out to scrap the Barnett formula – it still means £4 billion in cuts. Four billion pounds. That’s the equivalent of the entire Scottish schools budget or twice the budget for the whole of the NHS in Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Gone. (Kezia Dugdale, 12 January 2015, [link](#))
- ‘Alex Salmond’s plans to scrap the Barnett formula means £4 billion worth of cuts’ (12 January 2015, [link](#))
- ‘Buy a Daily Record to read why I’m backing Nicola Sturgeon’s efforts to protect the Barnett formula.’ (14 February 2016, [link](#))
- ‘I’ll keep the Barnett Formula today, tomorrow, forever @JimforScotland #Scotdebates’ (8 April 2015, [link](#))
- ‘Scrapping the Barnett Formula for Full Fiscal Autonomy is economic madness and would cost 138,000 jobs’ (6 January 2014, [link](#))

Ian Murray has said Barnett was ‘incredibly important’ to Scotland

Ian Murray: “It is incredibly important that Scotland’s position in the UK is maintained through the block grant and the Barnett formula” (Ian Murray, *Hansard*, 21 July 2016, [link](#)).