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Hospitals across Scotland have lost more than 8000 beds since 2003, official statistics have revealed.

According to the Scottish Government, there are now 21,028 non-intensive care beds across the country.

That compares to 29,445 beds 13 years ago, a reduction of almost 30 per cent.

The Scottish Conservatives said while there was a shift in the way people are treated, with many being cared for in non-hospital settings, the drop was still "hugely significant".

The figures were released following a parliamentary question by Scottish Conservative MSP Miles Briggs.

They also revealed the number of intensive care beds have increased, from 700 in 2003 to more than 900 now.

The decrease in non-intensive care beds has hit health boards across the country.

In NHS Lothian there were reductions at St John's Hospital in Livingston (503 to 432), while Ninewells Hospital in Dundee (854 to 800) and Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (870 to 682) also experienced bed cuts.

Since the SNP came to power and assumed full control of the health brief in 2007, the number of overall non-intensive beds have gone from 26,367 to 21,028, a drop of a fifth.

Scottish Conservative public health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

"We know the way people are being treated is changing, with more receiving the care they need outwith hospital settings.

"However, the SNP cannot just hide behind that argument when bed numbers have dropped by nearly a third since 2003. That's hugely significant.

"The population is increasing and ageing, and the pressure on the NHS is like never before.

“That’s why the Scottish Government has to get the balance right, and simply slashing the number of beds without thinking of the consequences is not the way to do it.

“This is more evidence of an SNP distracted by its obsession with breaking up Britain, neglecting our precious NHS in the process.”

Below is the number of non-intensive care beds by year in Scotland:

2003 – 29,445
2004 – 28,481
2005 – 27,741
2006 – 27,018
2007 – 26,367
2008 – 25,804
2009 – 25,083
2010 – 24,116
2011 – 23,290
2012 – 22,786
2013 – 22,521
2014 – 22,220
2015 – 21,560
2016 – 21,028

To see a full breakdown of the number of beds lost since 2003, visit:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Hospital-Beds.xlsx>