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The appointment of another special adviser to the Scottish Government means numbers have returned to the previous record high under the SNP.

It was confirmed over the weekend that Callum McCaig, who lost his seat as an MP in June, is now working as a SPAD.

That takes the total number to 14, the same level as the independence referendum, and considerably more than the nine employed in 2012.

The increase comes despite the SNP previously saying it would cut down on SPADs, and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon describing similar appointments to Mr McCaig in Westminster as “an absolute abomination”.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Over the years the SNP has repeatedly said it wants to reduce the number of special advisers working for government.

“Yet this latest appointment returns numbers to the previous record level.

“For some reason, when the UK Government appoints former politicians it is an ‘absolute abomination’, according to Nicola Sturgeon.

“Yet in recent times, she has appointed two former SNP politicians to the public payroll.

“The SNP clearly thinks it can use taxpayer’s cash in this way without any recourse from voters at all.

“But people are increasingly seeing through the SNP’s hypocritical ways.”

Scottish Government spending on SPADs has more than doubled under the SNP.

From 2007/8 to 2015/16 expenditure on SPADs increased from £480,251 to £1,140,104. The number of special advisers has increased from 9 to 14 (The Scottish Parliament, *Question S4W-10032*, 4 October 2012, [link](#); The Scottish Parliament, *Question S5W-00837*, 16 June 2016, [link](#); Scottish Government, *Special advisers: July 2017*, [link](#)).

- **The SNP have given SPAD jobs to two ex-parliamentarians.** Stewart Maxwell is a former West of Scotland MSP and Callum McCaig is a former MP for Aberdeen South (Scottish Government, *Special advisers: July 2017*, [link](#)).
- **Alex Salmond promised that he would reduce the number of special advisers as part of a cut in bureaucracy.** 'We could do with less ministers and therefore less ministerial departments, probably less executive agencies, certainly less special advisers, because I think one of the key attributes of joined-up government is to have less bits to join up.' (*The Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 2006, p6).
- **John Swinney previously said 'We need more medical doctors not spin doctors' but has two SPADs working on his brief.** Colin McAllister and Kate Higgins both cover education (*Glasgow Evening Times*, 25 July 2006, p6)
- The previous record for SPADs was 14:
<https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-scottish-mail-on-sunday/20150802/281728383229112>