

NHS vacancies hit new high

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The number of nursing and consultancy vacancies in Scotland has reached a record high, new figures have revealed.

ISD Scotland analysis has shown 5.2 per cent of nursing and midwifery posts are now vacant – the equivalent of more than 3200 jobs.

Health visitors and paediatric services have the highest rates, with many having lain empty for more than six months.

It is also the first time ever nursing and midwifery vacancy rates have breached the five per cent mark.

In addition, the 8.5 per cent vacancy rate among consultants is the highest since figures began being published in 2007.

Nearly half of those have been vacant for more than six months, while some disciplines – like clinical radiology – have vacancy rates of almost 15 per cent.

The statistics put more pressure on the SNP, which has been consistently criticised for its stewardship of the NHS over the last decade.

The increase in vacancies means more money has to be spent on expensive bank and agency nurses, with many wards being left under-staffed.

Today, ISD Scotland also revealed that 8.2 per cent of operations were cancelled last month, with a shortage of staff and resources often blamed for the cancellations.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“This is a problem created by the SNP, which continually gets worse.

“In an organisation the size of the NHS, there will always be a certain number of vacancies.

“But this now accounts for thousands of nurses, midwives and consultants.

“The consequence of that is a huge reduction in the standard of care offered to patients, and a miserable existence for staff left over to pick up the slack.

“Nothing the SNP government is doing to address this appears to be working.

“The nationalists have been in charge of health for a decade, and in that time have presided over failure.

“It’s time for a proper explanation as to why this has been allowed to happen.”

To see the full report, visit:

<https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Workforce/Publications/2017-09-05/2017-09-05-Workforce-Report.pdf>