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Maintenance staff at the health board at the centre of the pigeon disease death scandal have been significantly reduced in recent years, it has been revealed.

Analysis of figures by the Scottish Conservatives has shown there was an 11.5 per cent cut in maintenance and estate workers in the two years to September 2018.

And the ISD Scotland data states, at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, the numbers have reduced by 18.6 per cent since 2009.

The SNP government is under increasing pressure over the deaths of two patients at the Queen Elizabeth hospital on Glasgow's southside, one of whom has now been revealed as a child.

Reports today show the scale of hygiene problems at the "super hospital", which cost £850 million and was only officially opened in 2015.

The most recent statistics show there were 385 "maintenance and estate" staff in Glasgow's NHS in 2018.

That compares to 435 in 2016 and 473 in 2009.

Across Scotland, there were 1651 such workers in 2018, compared to 1749 in 2016 and 1963 in 2009.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said the reduction in workers was one of many questions the SNP government had to answer about the crisis.

Ministers were informed of the deaths on December 21 last year, yet health secretary Jeane Freeman only addressed Holyrood yesterday on the matter.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"Only now, after this scandal has been brought to light, is the SNP reviewing maintenance at Glasgow's super hospital.

"For Jeane Freeman to say infection control at the hospital is adequate is absolutely astonishing, particularly in the wake of two deaths, one of whom

was a child.

“That’s a complacent attitude, and one which simply won’t cut it with patients or staff.

“The big question is why ministers are failing to stop things like this happening in the first place, and why it takes a scandal like this for them to act.

“In Glasgow alone, dozens of maintenance staff have been cut in recent years in the lead up to this scandal.

“Across Scotland, patients will look at the nationwide reduction and wonder what other desperate consequences these SNP cuts could have.

“With that in mind, is it any wonder that – more than a month after a patient has died – we are still seeing rooms plastered in pigeon droppings?”