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The Scottish Conservatives have criticised the SNP's reduction of hospital beds for dementia patients as the latest figures reveal that deaths from dementia have almost tripled in the last 15 years.

The figures published in Scotland's Population 2018 – The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends shows that dementia deaths have risen from 2354 in 2004 to 6484 in 2018, a staggering increase of 175 percent.

The statistics come after a parliamentary written answer revealed that the SNP has cut the number of "psychiatry of old age" hospital beds, the vast majority of which cater for patients with conditions like dementia, by over a third, to only 1774.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said the figures are more evidence of a dementia 'time-bomb' and that the SNP must stop ignoring the rapidly increasing number of dementia patients and their families.

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary said:

"This is yet more evidence of the dementia time-bomb in Scotland and the SNP must take notice.

"This rapidly increasing number of people dying with dementia cannot be ignored as it simply highlights how many more people and their families also need support for those living with dementia.

"Recent figures have shown that rather than accommodating these changing pressures, the SNP is actually cutting the number of specifically designated hospital beds.

"The SNP's failure to design services that cater for dementia sufferers unfairly burdens relatives, patients and social care services.

"We know this trend is going to continue but the SNP has failed to prepare either hospital care or community care services to support people living with dementia and their families.

“The SNP has been in sole charge of health and community care for 12 years and it has utterly failed to design a service fit for the long term.

“Scottish Conservatives successfully forced SNP Ministers to adopt Frank’s Law to deliver free personal care for people under 65 living with life limiting conditions.

“We need to see a new focus and vision to support the increasing number of people in Scotland living with dementia.”