

SNP Ministers failed to act on flu warnings

7 Jan 2018



SNP Ministers failed to act on clear warnings that Scotland faced an imminent flu crisis this winter, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Calls to boost jab rates ahead of this winter were made last September after figures revealed a drop in the number of inoculations to all groups for whom the flu jab is recommended.

At the time, the Scottish Conservatives urged action to ensure more people received the crucial flu jab this winter.

However, provisional figures for this year suggest that uptake in key groups is no higher than last year.

The fears about low jab rates was reinforced in December when further figures revealed that only one in three healthcare workers received flu jabs last winter – well below the target of 50%.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs today said the SNP had failed to heed warnings about an imminent flu crisis hitting the NHS.

He said Ministers now needed to set out action to ensure more people were getting the right jab for the rest of the winter.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs MSP said:

“The SNP was warned about the dangers of a flu crisis this winter. All the signs were there. They knew vaccination rates were dropping.

“Yet despite our repeated calls for action, they failed to act in time to protect more people, and support our NHS.

“Instead all we get are excuses and belated attempts to act.

“This whole sorry episode is yet more evidence of SNP mismanagement of our NHS. Shona Robison should apologise immediately for her mishandling of this crisis.

“They knew they had a problem – and, once again, were found asleep at the wheel. It is a disgrace.”

1. Warnings about this winter’s uptake of the flu jab were raised by the

Scottish Conservatives on September 29th last year:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/09/warnings-over-flu-epidemic-after-jab-uptake-falls/>

2. Up to date provisional figures for 2017-18 flu jab rates are published here, on page 4:

www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/resourcedocument.aspx?id=6321

They show vaccination rates of:

- 71.0% in people aged 65 years and over, (compared with 71.0% in 2016-17)
- 41.3% in under 65's at-risk, (compared with 42.2% in 2016-17)
- 52.6% in preschool children (2 to under 5 year olds), compared with 54.8% in 2016-17
- 71.0% in primary school children, compared with 71.0% in 2016-17