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The SNP has failed to produce a plan for reducing the number of suicides in Scotland, despite promising it would be ready by the end of June.

It means Scotland has been without a suicide strategy for a year-and-a-half, with the previous plan running out in 2016.

Last month, then mental health minister Maureen Watt promised the vision would be published before July.

Now that the plan has failed to surface, the Scottish Conservatives are demanding urgent action on suicide prevention.

Mental health spokeswoman Annie Wells backs calls made by charities for a new national body to be created to drive forward change, and for increased support for bereaved families.

In addition, the party wants to see more suicide prevention training for key staff.

While the number of suicides north of the border reduced slightly last year, there was still a worrying rise in male casualties, from 517 to 522.

Scottish Conservative mental health spokeswoman Annie Wells said:

“It’s not good enough that Scotland has been without a suicide prevention strategy for a year-and-a-half.

“The SNP government said it would publish this by the end of June, but still nothing has happened.

“This should be a priority area for any government, but clearly the SNP’s action doesn’t match its words.

“Suicide remains a major killer in Scotland, particularly among men, yet we have an SNP government that is being complacent.

“We cannot afford for this to drag on any longer.”

Notes to editors:

Scotland's previous suicide prevention strategy expired at the end of 2016:

<http://www.gov.scot/resource/0043/00439429.pdf>

It has not been replaced, despite SNP ministers saying it would be published by the end of June:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/extra-3-million-in-funding-for-suicide-prevention-announced-by-scottish-government/>

For more information on the Mental Health Foundation and its campaigns, visit:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/preventing-suicide-scotland>