

SNP's £500k a day on NHS agency staff

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The SNP is spending nearly £500k per day on agency staff in the Scottish NHS, it has been revealed.

The figure emerged following a parliamentary question by shadow health secretary Miles Briggs, and shows more than £171 million was paid out to private agencies last year.

And while it's a small decrease from last year, this still represents double the amount spent when the SNP came to office in 2007.

Despite protestations against private funding in the NHS, the SNP has increased agency funding to record levels.

Several health boards have seen dramatic increases in their spending on agency staff, including Ayrshire and Arran where there was an increase of almost £3 million, and Grampian where the figure rose by £4 million.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"Agency staff are really important in our NHS as they are flexible and can fill short-term staffing gaps, as well as reducing waiting lists.

"However the SNP mismanagement of the NHS has clearly led to a long term reliance on agency staff at very high cost.

"These figures expose the utter hypocrisy of the SNP as it has consistently spoken against private involvement in the NHS whilst spending half a million pounds each day to agency staff.

"The SNP has totally failed to ensure that staffing levels in the NHS are sufficient, and with morale at rock bottom among doctors and nurses, this will only get worse.

"It's time the SNP took responsibility for this situation, get on with the day job, and make sure our NHS has enough staff to function properly".