

SNP's multi-million GP recruitment scheme secures just 18 new doctors

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An SNP initiative to hire more GPs has attracted just 18 new doctors in the two years since it was launched.

It has been revealed that the GP Recruitment and Retention Programme, unveiled in 2015, hasn't even delivered a single GP in certain areas of the country.

The information was published following a parliamentary question by shadow health secretary Miles Briggs.

Ministers announced funding of £2.5 million in the summer of 2015, with the aim of securing more family doctors in rural and deprived areas.

The scheme was then re-announced in March, with the promise of a further £5 million worth of investment.

However, now health secretary Shona Robison has confirmed the project has led to five new GPs for Glasgow, seven for Tayside, and a handful in other parts of the country.

It's the latest set of figures highlighting Scotland's GP crisis.

Thousands of doctors have left Scotland over the past three years, while a third of GP training places are unfilled.

Within the next few years, it is anticipated there will be a shortage of more than 800 GPs across the country.

In response, the Scottish Conservatives have launched the Save Our Surgeries campaign, which aims to fill the gaps left by the SNP in recent years and secure a greater proportion of funding for general practice.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"It's no wonder Scotland is in the grip of a general practice crisis when the SNP government fails so miserably to attract doctors to the job.

"This was launched with the promise of delivering GPs for rural and deprived areas.

“Instead, it’s led to a handful of new appointments which will barely have had any impact at all.

“Indeed, at this rate it would take this scheme almost a century to address the shortage of 856 GPs we’re expected to have.

“This is just another blatant failing of the SNP workforce planning, and the consequences on the ground are a population struggling to get a GP appointment, and those family doctors who are left feeling the strain.”

The full parliamentary answer from Shona Robison is below:

2 November 2017 (Holding Reply Issued 27 October 2017)

Index Heading: Health and Social Care

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government how many GPs have been recruited through the GP Recruitment and Retention Fund, broken down by the NHS board that they have been allocated to.

S5W-11652

Shona Robison: The GP Recruitment and Retention fund was set up to explore with key stakeholders, the issues surrounding GP recruitment and retention. The programme has examined and taken forward proposals to increase the number of medical students choosing to go into GP training, as well as encouraging those wanting to work in rural and economically deprived areas. To date this has resulted in a number of initiatives directly recruiting GPs as part of their test of change and numbers are reflected in the following table by health board area:

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde -Deep End Pioneer Scheme	5
NHS Ayrshire and Arran	3
NHS Borders	2
NHS Lothian	1
NHS Tayside	7

The fund is also supporting a range of initiatives including the establishment of a Scottish Rural Medicine Collaborative involving ten NHS Boards. This initiative will bring together recruitment strategies and support networks for GPs working in remote and rural areas; GPST bursaries for hard to fill places; Development of a new national GP recruitment website to be hosted and managed by NSS that will act as a one stop shop for GP recruitment across Scotland; and continued support for the NES Enhanced Returners scheme which supports GPs wishing to return to the profession. In Scotland over 90% of the 1082 GP Training places are now filled.

The scheme was announced in June 2015:

<https://news.gov.scot/news/primary-care-investment>

The Scottish Conservatives have launched a Save Our Surgeries campaign:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/10/up-to-3000-doctors-have-left-scotland-in-the-last-decade/>

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/10/third-of-scottish-gp-training-places-go-unfilled/>