

Health targets must be outcome focused

15 Nov 2017



Former Chief Medical Officer Sir Harry Burns has carried out an independent national review into targets and indicators for health and social care.

The review states that the present system of targets and indicators is fragmented and many of the indicators do not lend themselves to effective improvement interventions.

It has been recommended that health and social care services move to a system of indicators and targets which allow improvements across the whole system of care to be tracked.

Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Health, Miles Briggs said:

“This report accurately identifies that the current system of targets has not improved health outcomes enough.

“This report is welcome and, I know from speaking with many frontline NHS staff, we clearly need to change the target culture in our NHS.

“These recommendations should give all our medical professionals the time and confidence to deliver the world class health care we all want to see.

“Scottish Conservatives have long advocated a shift in our health services to outcomes based approach and I hope Sir Harry Burns’ Report will be fully implemented by Scottish Ministers.

“However, it will be entirely unacceptable for SNP Ministers simply to use Sir Harry Burns Report as cover to rip up the health targets which they have failed to meet over the last decade while they have been in charge of the NHS in Scotland.”

Sturgeon must end Indyref2 threats

14 Nov 2017



Nicola Sturgeon must rule out a second independence referendum when she meets the Prime Minister later today, Scottish Conservatives have warned.

The call comes after senior SNP MP Tommy Shepherd yesterday threatened a second independence referendum if the Scottish Parliament fails to support UK Government Brexit legislation.

He said that, if the UK Government “ignored” the Scottish Government “the mandate from 2016 is there, and it will be executed, because we will give the people of Scotland a right to decide.”

Mr Shepherd’s comments appear to contradict those of Nicola Sturgeon who said in June that she would “reset” the SNP’s timetable for a referendum, following the party’s losses in the general election.

Ahead of her meeting with the Prime Minister today, the Scottish Conservatives are urging Nicola Sturgeon to make clear she will dump the referendum threats – and instead engage with the UK Government to find a common solution on Brexit which both protects the UK internal market and delivers a stronger Scottish Parliament.

Ross Thomson, the MP for Aberdeen South said:

“So much for the SNP listening to people – Tommy Shepherd has once again shown the Nationalists will use any excuse to take Scotland back to a second referendum.

“It’s a complete outrage. Nicola Sturgeon is in Westminster today and she needs to take this threat off the table immediately.

“End the games – and stop using Brexit to try to split out country in two.”

Adam Tomkins, MSP for Glasgow and the party’s constitution spokesman added:

“The Scottish Conservatives are committed to delivering Brexit in a way that protects the UK internal market and respects devolution.

The way to deliver that is through dialogue and compromise – not through the same old tired Nationalist threats.

“It’s time the SNP listened for once and respected the results of both referendums we have been through.”

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- Scottish government must focus diabetes resources on prevention and mental health support

14 Nov 2017



On World Diabetes Day the Scottish Conservatives are calling on the Scottish Government to focus resources on prevention of diabetes and mental health support for those suffering from the illness.

There are currently over 276,000 people living with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, 500,000 at high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and 45,500 living with undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes in Scotland.

Recent research has shown that diabetes takes up about 10% of the total NHS budget and about 80% of that goes on avoidable complications. This means just over £1 billion is spent on diabetes per year in Scotland.

Scottish Shadow Health Secretary Miles Briggs said;

“This is fast-becoming one of Scotland’s major public health crises.

“Diabetes affects people of all ages, and from all backgrounds, and we need to see more action from the Scottish Government in order to prevent more people from being diagnosed with diabetes.

“There are clearly areas that must be improved in terms of greater access to medical technology, further co-ordination of staff and care and the delivery of more person centred care.

“However, the Scottish Government must also ensure that patients are receiving proper mental health support in order to cope with a serious life-altering condition.

“The increasing diabetes drugs bill and growing obesity levels again call in to question the SNP government’s decision, breaking its own manifesto pledges, to scrap health checks for all men and women when they reach the age of 40.

“This is something we would review as part of a focus on preventative health measures.”

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- New contract must make General Practice an attractive option

13 Nov 2017



BMA Scotland have announced that they have reached an agreement with the Scottish Government on a new contract for general practice.

It aims to address the woeful recruitment levels experienced in recent years, with thousands of doctors having left Scotland over the past three years, and a third of GP training places going unfilled.

And just last week the Scottish Conservatives' Save Our Surgeries campaign revealed that the SNP's GP Recruitment and Retention Programme has attracted just 18 new doctors in the two years since it was launched.

The draft agreement will now be sent to GPs and GP trainees so they have the opportunity to have their say in a poll to take place in December.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs welcomed the proposed new contract, but said that the Scottish Government needs to do more to prioritise primary care.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs MSP said:

"The current problems in our GP services are clear to see, and there is no doubt that the Scottish Government need to prioritise primary care.

"Making General Practice an attractive option for the next generation of medical students is vitally important in helping solve the current recruitment crisis.

"We also need to show GPs currently working in Scotland that they are valued and will be supported to provide first class health care to their local community.

"I welcome the introduction of longer consultations for patients with complex needs, an issue raised by the Scottish Conservatives previously, and the new funding formula which takes into the account the demographics and deprivation of local areas.

"This contract looks like a move in the right direction, yet it is ten years too late and the Scottish Government must now show they can turn their words into action."

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13 Nov 2017



New figures have shown that 8,796 ophthalmology patients are waiting longer than the Scottish Government's waiting time target of 12 weeks. This represents 26% of all ophthalmology outpatients.

These figures also demonstrate that since June 2015 the amount of patients missing this waiting time target has risen by 6,847 or 351%.

In the most extreme cases, patients are being forced to wait up to 546 days, or 78 weeks for essential cataract surgery. In addition, half of all health boards report substantially increased maximum waiting times.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs MSP commented:

"Many cataract patients are elderly and their sight is extremely important. These statistics show that they are having to wait an unacceptably long time, and this wait is only getting longer.

"I do understand that cataract surgery is not a life or death situation, but the quality of life that it brings is vital for many people.

"For many elderly people it could make a significant difference to their ability to get out of the house or participate in group activities which are so important to prevent loneliness.

"Just because they are elderly doesn't mean they should be treated any less quickly than anyone else who needs treatment."