

# Number of pupils requiring additional support dramatically rises

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Number of pupils requiring additional support dramatically rises

28 Feb 2017



The number of school pupils in Scotland requiring additional support has more than doubled in six years, a report to Holyrood's education committee will reveal on Wednesday.

The report will show that the total number of pupils in need of additional support has seen a sharp 153 per cent rise since 2010.

Among the highest number of additional support was the need for social, emotional and behavioural difficulty assistance.

A total of 36,030 students have been revealed to require this form of support, a striking increase from 1 per 1,000 students to 4.1 per 1,000 since 2002.

The report also reveals that 2,044 young carers required additional support during 2016.

The worrying statistics have intensified criticism of the SNP on additional support needs, after a report released in January revealed that the 2,896 additional support teachers employed was the lowest since 2007.

With these figures revealing the ever-increasing demand for additional support teachers across Scotland, the Scottish Conservatives are now calling for answers from the SNP as to why it has continually slashed the number of support teachers.

**Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:**

"The SNP has repeatedly declared that education is a major priority, but its actions suggest otherwise.

"The growth in the number of pupils being identified with additional support needs has been accompanied by a fall in the number of teachers with the relevant specialist skills.

"Because of this fall in additional support teachers, many pupils are being badly let down.

"There is a very important debate to be had about the effectiveness of

mainstreaming for some of our most vulnerable children, but that will not happen if there are too few teachers with the relevant skills.”

---

**Copy of the education report papers:**

[http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_Education/Meeting%20Papers/ESCtteePublicPapers20170301.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Meeting%20Papers/ESCtteePublicPapers20170301.pdf)

---

## [SNP urged to act after businesses hit by licensing change](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- SNP urged to act after businesses hit by licensing change

27 Feb 2017



The Scottish Conservatives are demanding the SNP to start providing the necessary support to the businesses across Scotland who have been negatively affected by the Air Weapons and Licensing Act (AWLA).

The act was implemented last year despite the Scottish Conservatives voting against it.

It has recently emerged that as a result of the SNP's legislation many businesses face an uncertain future, particularly in the private car hire industry, many of whom have voiced concern.

Wedding car operators are just one of the industries sucker-punched by the AWLA provisions.

Many of them are being forced to pay the large cash sums in order to pay for the licenses that are needed to meet the additional costs.

The unfair regulations saw West of Scotland MSP Jamie Greene echo the worries of the affected businesses to Nicola Sturgeon during last week's First Minister's Questions.

Mr Greene asked the First Minister: "What action is being done to mitigate the impact that their Weapons and Licensing Act is having on industries?"

Ms Sturgeon replied: "With any piece of legislation it's vital that we strike

the right balance between the legislation doing what it is intended to do without putting unnecessary burdens on business or anyone else.”

Mr Greene’s question was not the first time he had brought the issue to the SNP’s attention, and he is now demanding that the SNP provides the support needed for the businesses hit.

**Scottish Conservative West MSP Jamie Greene said:**

“The SNP simply has to start providing solutions and answers for these many businesses affected.

“Despite numerous attempts to reach out to the SNP I have yet to receive any real clarity on the matter.

“During First Minister’s Questions I brought to light the story of one of my constituents, Mr Brian Jay of Saltcoats.

“Mr Jay owns and runs ‘Jay’s Luxury Wedding Cars’ and as a result of this act risks having to shut the private hire part of his business.

“The SNP needs to find a way to address the issues business face as a result of the Air Weapons and Licensing Act, and provide some clarity for the likes of Mr Jay and many other businesses across Scotland.

“The uncertainty is already damaging confidence in the industry.

“It’s vital that the SNP outline what assessments they will be undertaking on individual operators and set out a clear time frame for doing so.”

---

## [Police Scotland changes ‘must not deplete the frontline’](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- [Police Scotland changes ‘must not deplete the frontline’](#)

27 Feb 2017



Frontline policing in Scotland must be protected amid a range of changes being proposed by the single force, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Police Scotland unveiled its plan for the next decade today, including an acknowledgement that officer numbers would have to reduce.

This is despite a previous pledge by the SNP to retain 1000 extra police officers on Scotland's streets.

'2026: Serving a Changing Scotland' set out how the force will adapt over the next decade.

The report said there would be a £60 million black hole by the end of next year, a statistic that would endure "without the commencement of an effective transformation plan".

Workforce numbers would be protected in 2017/18, the report said, but no such commitment was in place for future years.

Police Scotland said "bureaucracy" was still one of the major internal challenges it faced, despite the single force being created to reduce such issues.

And the paper poured cold water on SNP claims that Scotland is safer now than it's been in 40 years, pointing out "crime figures are not an accurate measure of demand".

At the document's launch, the Scottish Police Authority warned 400 fewer officers would be in place by 2020, and that hundreds were already filling back office duties.

**Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross said:**

"These are extremely stark warnings about the future of Police Scotland.

"It's absolutely imperative these planned changes do not deplete the frontline of policing in Scotland.

"The SNP created the single force on the basis it would save money, be more efficient and ensure more time could be spent fighting crime.

"Instead, four years in, there's a black hole of tens of millions of pounds, officer numbers are to be reduced and bureaucracy is as much an issue as ever.

"The Scottish Government has been in sole charge of justice for nearly a decade now, and these bleak warnings are a Result of its choices.

"We now need urgent assurances that any changes made to Police Scotland's approach will not put public safety at risk."

---

**To see a copy of the report, visit:**

[https://consult.scotland.police.uk/consultation/2026/user\\_uploads/policing-2026-strategy-for-consultation.pdf](https://consult.scotland.police.uk/consultation/2026/user_uploads/policing-2026-strategy-for-consultation.pdf)

---

---

# [Time for whole-life sentences to bring justice for murder victims](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Time for whole-life sentences to bring justice for murder victims

23 Feb 2017



A member's bill on whole-life sentences will be brought before MSPs following an exchange at First Minister's Questions today.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson highlighted the case of the killer of 15-year-old Paige Doherty, who earlier this month had his sentence reduced by four years on appeal.

She asked Nicola Sturgeon to commit to introducing whole-life sentences, so that judges could ensure killers like John Leathem were locked up for life.

The First Minister stopped short of committing to the move, meaning a member's bill will now be brought forward in an attempt to make whole life sentences possible north of the border.

## **Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:**

"The First Minister acknowledged this was a fair issue to raise.

"The question for her SNP government is why it has spent 10 years doing nothing about it.

"It's entirely unacceptable that, less than a year after watching her killer get locked up, Paige Doherty's family should go through the ordeal of seeing him reduce his sentence, on the flawed basis he's not as bad a killer as others.

"Of course it is right to point out we should uphold the independence of the judiciary.

"But it is also the case that the parliament makes law and the Scottish Government sets the framework under which our judges operate.

"That's why there has to be change.

"A system which cuts a child murderer's sentence because he's deemed not as bad as others is rightly seen by most people as a disgrace.

“So if the SNP won’t act then we will, by pushing ahead with a member’s bill making the case for the introduction of whole-life sentencing in Scotland.

“Whole-life sentences are a tool that judges should have at their disposal. As it stands, in Scotland, they do not.”

---

The Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly called for whole-life sentences in Scotland:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2012/01/life-sentences-should-mean-life/>  
<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2013/05/new-life-sentences-for-police-killers-puts-more-pressure-on-snp-to-toughen-law-in-scotland/>

The killer of Paige Doherty successfully reduced his sentence by four years, arguing he wasn’t as bad as other killers:

<https://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/news/628240/paige-doherty-campaign-no-justice-for-paige/>

---

## [Tens of thousands of businesses won’t benefit from SNP rate relief plan](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Tens of thousands of businesses won’t benefit from SNP rate relief plan

22 Feb 2017



Nearly 100,000 businesses facing rates rises will not benefit from the relief plan announced by the SNP Government yesterday.

Following pressure from the Scottish Conservatives, finance secretary Derek Mackay announced a one-year 12.5% cap on rates rises for the hospitality industry and for office premises in the North East.

However it was condemned as a mere ‘sticking plaster’ by the Scottish Retail Consortium.

And a detailed breakdown of Scottish Government figures has revealed that the relief plan will benefit just 9,530 businesses, with 98,777 not receiving any help at all from the Scottish Government.

This includes 8,899 businesses in Glasgow, with just 563 being helped by yesterday’s announcement.

**Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:**

“For weeks the SNP ignored the issue of business rates, and now it turns out that their proposed plan will only help a fraction of businesses.

“Around Scotland businesses are facing closure if they don’t receive real help from the Scottish Government, but these figures show that the vast majority will still not receive any assistance.

“It’s no wonder that Derek Mackay’s statement has done little to ease concerns in the business community, especially as even those who do benefit from this plan will only see their rates capped for a year.

“We need to see meaningful action from the SNP if we are to avoid seeing these businesses going to the wall, and it’s becoming clear that the SNP need to go back to the drawing board on this plan.”