

Tens of thousands of 'adverse events' in Scotland's dementia and geriatric wards

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- Tens of thousands of 'adverse events' in Scotland's dementia and geriatric wards

1 Feb 2017



Dozens of "adverse events" are recorded every day in the dementia and geriatric wards of Scotland's hospitals, new figures have shown.

A Freedom of Information request revealed 167,041 such incidents have occurred in the past six years as an under pressure health service attempts to deal with an ageing population.

The Scottish Conservatives said the data illustrates problems many vulnerable patients have encountered, as well as the daily challenges facing staff in elderly inpatient wards.

Incidents range from falls and assaults on staff to self-harm and patients absconding from secure facilities.

In NHS Borders, one staff member was injured while receiving training in dealing with aggressive patients, and in Fife there were reports of bomb threats and suspicious packages, as well as "rooftop protests".

Much more seriously, bosses at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde said adverse events had resulted in the deaths of 49 patients since 2011.

In some cases, staff shortages were posing such a risk that employees formally logged that as an adverse event in itself, while in the Western Isles a lack of staff was blamed directly for allowing a patient to climb out a window and escape from hospital.

Shadow health secretary Donald Cameron warned these problems would become more commonplace as Scotland's population aged, and cases of dementia increased.

The true figure is likely to be even higher, as some health boards were unable to provide the information, or supplied only the most serious of events.

Last year, it was revealed that maternity units across Scotland had also endured thousands of adverse events, prompting calls for an investigation.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Donald Cameron said:

“Patients in dementia and geriatric wards are among the most vulnerable in our hospitals, and deserve the best possible care.

“And there’s no question that wards dealing with dementia patients are incredibly challenging places to work: many of these incidents illustrate that.

“In such environments many of these adverse incidents will have been unavoidable, and it’s a credit to hardworking NHS staff that they deal with these day, in day out.

“But patients in these wards, and their families, will be extremely worried at the sheer scale of these flashpoints.

“There are a significant number of incidents which were put down to staffing shortages, or a lack of adequate resources and training, and that very much falls at the Scottish Government’s door.

“As our population ages and conditions like dementia become more prevalent, it’s clear something needs to be done to ensure these incidents don’t increase.

“We need to see a proper plan to make sure our staff and hospitals are equipped for all the future challenges they face.”

Below is a list of the adverse events recorded by health boards for the past six years:

Ayrshire and Arran – 15,043
Borders – 10,252
Dumfries and Galloway – 6399
Fife – 19,308
Forth Valley – 13,629
Greater Glasgow and Clyde – 270
Grampian – 16,426
Highland – 7073
Lanarkshire – 33,092
Lothian – 44,890
Orkney – n/a
Shetland – n/a
Tayside – no response
Western Isles – 659

Total – 167,041

Below is a list of the national figures broken down by year:

2011 – 28,239
2012 – 28,659

2013 – 28,317
2014 – 29,847
2015 – 28,906
2016 – 23,118*

Total – 167,041

**Some health boards only supplied information for part of 2016, which may explain the lower number.*

All details were obtained by the Scottish Conservatives through Freedom of Information. For a copy of individual responses, contact the Scottish Conservative press office.

Last year, it was revealed that thousands of adverse events had occurred in maternity units across the country:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-38055060>

[Ruth attacks SNP's 'bully pulpit' on Brexit](#)

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- Ruth attacks SNP's 'bully pulpit' on Brexit

31 Jan 2017



The SNP will be attacked over its “bully pulpit” approach to Brexit in a keynote speech tonight.

Addressing the David Hume Institute in Edinburgh, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson will say the nationalists’ behaviour “doesn’t speak of a party confident of its case”.

She will point to polls showing plunging support for a second independence referendum, and reports suggesting the SNP may be poised to ditch its long-term stance of keeping a separate Scotland in the EU.

Ahead of the Holyrood budget debate later this week, she will also stress that the Scottish Conservatives will not support any budget that makes Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson will say:

“In recent weeks, the SNP appears to have decided to double-down on its

attempt to push for a second referendum.

“Now it’s not just about Brexit. Now, Mike Russell takes to the airwaves to declare that we need a referendum to escape what he describes as an ‘insular’ and ‘inward-looking’ Britain.

“Indeed, if reports this week are to be believed, for the SNP hierarchy it is no longer about staying within the EU at all.

“Instead, SNP sources are now proposing that an independent Scotland should exist in a no-man’s land, half-way between the UK and the EU, but part of neither.

“It’s a position concocted purely to try and win back the many thousands of SNP supporters who voted to leave the EU.

“And now, with support for a referendum falling off a cliff, the SNP is no longer saying the people should have the right to decide.

“Nicola Sturgeon says a referendum is something we all ‘must confront’.

“In other words, having failed to persuade people of the necessity of another referendum, the SNP is now hoping to soften us up by telling us we’ll just have to accept it.

“It is the language of the bully pulpit. The attacks on the UK are grave distortions.

“It doesn’t speak of a party confident of its case. It smacks of desperation – and I urge the SNP to take a different path.

“Or to put it another way – when you’re in a hole, stop digging.”

And on the Scottish Government’s budget, Ruth will add:

“We will have no choice but to oppose this week’s budget, unless the SNP agrees to examine its tax proposals once again.

“We will do so because we believe that taxes here should not be higher than in the rest of the UK – and, where affordable, should be lower.

“That would boost growth and add to the Scottish Government’s coffers.”

You can read the full text of Ruth’s speech [here](#).

SNP ducks fracking decision for another year

31 Jan 2017



A decision on the future of shale extraction in Scotland will not be made for another year, it has been confirmed.

Having introduced a ban on fracking at the beginning of 2015, the SNP said today it would now make up its mind "by the end of 2017".

The official 'Talking Fracking' consultation will also wait until after the council elections in May before closing.

It means the Scottish Government will have sat on its hands for three years while other parts of the UK press on with the technology.

Experts have said shale extraction could provide an economic boost for Scotland, as well as create jobs and secure future supplies.

But both the SNP and Labour have dogmatic objections to fracking, even though privately the Scottish Government claims to be sympathetic.

Despite the moratorium on fracking, Scotland currently imports daily shipments of fracked gas from the US to refine at Grangemouth.

Scottish Conservative energy spokesman Alexander Burnett said:

"This is another spineless decision by the SNP on the topic of fracking.

"It should be looking at the potential for an economic boom and a more secure supply of power for people in Scotland.

"But instead, it's pandering to the left of the party because it doesn't want to lose votes in May's council elections.

"It is well-established that fracking can be explored safely and sensitively, yet the Scottish Government seems reluctant to even do that.

"And all the while, Scotland risks losing business surrounding the technology south of the border, where the government is altogether more open-minded on this."

To see the full document, visit:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00513575.pdf>

The ministerial foreword states: "We will then ask the Scottish Parliament to

vote on our recommendation, and we will come to a final decision by the end of 2017 on whether or not unconventional oil and gas has a role in Scotland's energy mix."

The Scottish Conservatives have long supported the need for exploring fracking north of the border, and opposed the moratorium that was introduced two years ago.

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2015/01/scottish-conservatives-oppose-moratorium-fracking/>

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30 Jan 2017



The Scottish Conservatives have announced they will bring forward a bill on Frank’s Law if the SNP continues to drag its heels on the matter.

Public health spokesman Miles Briggs said it was essential the campaign – which would enable those under the age of 65 suffering from conditions like dementia to access free care – was made law.

And he said if the Scottish Government doesn’t take action, he will introduce a Private Member’s Bill at Holyrood, which is likely to win majority support.

Last week, leaders of all parties except the SNP united outside the Scottish

Parliament to call for the law to be introduced.

Ruth Davidson, along with Kezia Dugdale, Patrick Harvie and Willie Rennie, were presented with party-themed campaign t-shirts by Amanda Kopel, the wife of former Dundee United player Frank, who the appeal is named after.

However, the yellow SNP t-shirt remained empty, as the party failed to send a single representative to the event.

But Mr Briggs said, now there's a parliamentary majority in favour of Frank's Law, he will act if the Scottish Government doesn't.

Last month, the Scottish Conservatives revealed the number of under 65s being treated for dementia was increasing, another indication that the law had to be introduced.

Scottish Conservative public health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

"There is a majority in the Scottish Parliament in favour of Frank's Law and ministers need to recognise this and implement it without further delay.

"Hopefully the Scottish Government will see sense and put this in place without me having to go through the parliamentary process of a Member's Bill.

"But if it does not, I will bring forward such a bill and invite all MSPs to support it to get this put into legislation.

"When you talk to Amanda Kopel and other campaigners you find out there are a lot of people who really need Frank's Law to happen.

"For so many families across Scotland, time is of the essence. As such, I will arrange a meeting with the Scottish Parliament's Non-Government Bills Unit to start early work on a potential bill."

For more information on Frank's Law, visit:

<http://frankslaw.org/>

The Scottish Conservatives have consistently supported the introduction of this legislation:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/12/sharp-rise-in-u65s-with-dementia-shows-need-for-franks-law/>