

[Ruth reacts to Article 50 decision](#)

24 Jan 2017



Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson has given her reaction to the Supreme Court decision that parliament must vote to trigger the UK's departure from the EU.

She said the SNP has been using the case "to hold the UK to ransom", and the party must now state if it wants Britain's negotiations to succeed or fail.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"The SNP tried to use this hearing to hold the rest of the UK to ransom. It has comprehensively failed to do so.

"All parties should now respect the ruling that the court has given.

"Yet typically, Nicola Sturgeon has decided to ignore it by stating – even before the verdict was in – that she would still seek a separate vote at Holyrood.

"The Scottish Conservatives will have no truck with yet more SNP stunts on Brexit.

"Whatever side people were on last year, Scotland wants to get on with the negotiations so we can start to leave the uncertainty of the last few years behind us.

"We have all had enough of the nationalists using every diversionary tactic they can to try to use Brexit to manufacture a case for separation.

"The SNP needs to decide: does it want Britain's renegotiation to succeed or fail?

"If it is the former, it needs to end the attempts to sow division and add to the uncertainty we face, and instead get behind the UK attempt to get the right deal for the whole UK."

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The Scottish Conservatives have called on the SNP to “come out of hiding” over its plans for the economy of an independent Scotland.

The nationalists’ Growth Commission, launched last year, presented a report to the party at the end of 2016 but it is yet to be published.

It comes as senior SNP figures have called on the party to ditch its support for the pound amid growing evidence it is divided over its flawed 2014 prospectus for independence.

The Scottish Conservatives will oppose any attempt by the SNP to bring forward a second independence referendum – and are calling on the SNP to rule it out.

And today, the UK Government outlined its plans for a modern industrial strategy, aimed at boosting business and creating more high-skilled jobs.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“Today the UK Government is setting out a clear way forward to prepare the UK for our future outside the EU.

“The SNP, by contrast, has once again spent the weekend threatening a second referendum on independence, which would pile even more uncertainty on to Scotland.

“Nicola Sturgeon last year set up a growth commission, but has conspicuously refused to reveal any of its proposals.

“If the SNP is really confident about its case for separation, it should let us know what its plans are.

“Anything short of that will simply confirm the fact that the nationalists are all bluster and no plan.

“It is time for the SNP to come out of hiding.”

The SNP pledged to publish findings from its growth commission before the end of 2016:

http://www.snp.org/snp_growth_commission

The UK Government published its industrial action plan today:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-38713327>

Agency nurses paid more than £1500 a shift

23 Jan 2017



Hospitals across Scotland are coughing up more than £1500 per shift for agency nurses to cover staffing rotas.

Three health boards have confirmed they paid more than that amount as managers struggle to find nurses to fill gaps across the country.

NHS Lanarkshire confirmed the highest amount it paid was £1565 for a single shift in 2015/16, closely followed by NHS Lothian, which paid £1528 to an agency the previous year.

In NHS Ayrshire and Arran, bosses estimated the highest single payment for a shift – defined as more than eight hours but less than 14 – was between £1300 and £1600.

And in NHS Tayside, an agency was paid £1251 for a single shift last year.

Most health boards refused to release the data, which had been requested through Freedom of Information by the Scottish Conservatives.

The Scottish Government has been repeatedly criticised for its increasing use of bank and agency nurses, as well as high levels of vacancies, with hundreds of roles lying empty for months at a time.

Last year, NHS boards spent £158 million paying for bank and agency nurses to cover shifts.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Donald Cameron said:

“It is staggering that hard-pressed health boards could find themselves paying this much to an agency for a nursing shift.

“Not only is it an astonishing waste of taxpayers’ money, but it’s a slap in the face to staff nurses who can only dream of such remuneration.

“Bank and agency nurses play an important role when it comes to helping plug gaps in the NHS.

“But demands of more than £1500 for a single shift are an abuse, and one health boards should not bow to.

“The SNP’s woeful lack of workforce planning and failure to train enough

nurses has created a situation where hospitals are too dependent on bank and agency staff.

“The result of that is health boards paying through the nose, when an adequately resourced rota could have done the job at a fraction of the price.

“Following these revelations, ministers should examine these instances of extremely high payments to agencies, and act to ensure they don’t occur again.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

Below is a summary of the health boards who responded to the following question by the Scottish Conservatives through Freedom of Information. For a copy of the responses, contact the Scottish Conservative press office.

Could the health board provide the largest amount paid for an agency nurse for one shift between 2013/14 and 2015/16:

NHS Ayrshire and Arran – £1300-1600 per shift

NHS Borders – £93.45 an hour

NHS Lanarkshire – £1565 per shift

NHS Lothian – £1528 per shift

NHS Tayside – £1251 per shift

The Scottish Conservatives have previously raised concern about the spend on bank and agency nurses:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2016/06/8689/>