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16 Oct 2018



Unemployment has fallen substantially both in Scotland and the UK, despite the SNP "spreading doom" on the impact of Brexit.

New figures have revealed the number of people looking for a job north of the border has fallen by 14,000, while wages are also on the rise.

It means the unemployment rate fell to just 3.9 per cent for the period between June and August this year.

The UK-wide unemployment rate also fell considerably, and now stands at only four per cent.

The Office for National Statistics said pay rose by 3.1 per cent in the last quarter, outstripping the inflation level of 2.5 per cent.

The improved position comes despite the SNP relentlessly warning about the consequences of leaving the European Union.

Only yesterday, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon spoke in London to speculate about the impact, and reiterated her desire to reverse the June 2016 vote.

However, the Scottish Conservatives have now told the SNP government to stop the scare-mongering, and start examining the opportunities which will be presented once the Brexit process is complete.

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said:

"For all the Brexit-related scaremongering from the SNP, it appears the economy both in Scotland and the rest of the UK is performing well.

"This is in the face of an SNP government which is refusing to examine the opportunities of Brexit, and using it only to spread doom and rabble-rouse for independence.

"These figures do fluctuate, but this encouraging news at least suggests there could well be a good future for Scotland's economy once we've left the European Union."

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15 Oct 2018



Nicola Sturgeon's latest intervention on Brexit is motivated solely by the break-up of Britain, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Speaking in London today, the First Minister reiterated her desire for the June 2016 vote to leave the European Union to be ignored, or at least for the UK to remain in the single market and customs union.

She also claimed any concession made to Northern Ireland should apply to Scotland.

However, Scottish Conservative constitution spokesman Adam Tomkins said the SNP leader's only reason for intervening was to push the case for another referendum on Scottish independence.

He pointed out there was nothing new in today's speech, or indeed the accompanying paper being published by the SNP government.

Ms Sturgeon's speech came on the same day as a new campaign for Scottish independence was launched.

Scottish Conservative constitution spokesman Adam Tomkins said:

"There was absolutely nothing new in this speech from Nicola Sturgeon.

"As ever, she is not intervening for the sake of a good Brexit deal, or for the good of the Northern Ireland border issue.

"She made this speech in the hope of drumming up the prospects for Scottish independence.

"From the second the Brexit vote became clear, that has been the SNP government's only motivation on this issue.

"If the SNP doesn't back a deal, it is automatically supporting a no-deal scenario – something the nationalists have admitted would be bad for Scotland.

“And, of course, they don’t care if outcomes are bad for Scotland, so long as they’re good for the prospects of another independence referendum.

“This was just the latest opportunistic contribution from Nicola Sturgeon, whose behaviour on the Brexit process has been selfish and utterly shameless.”

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10 Oct 2018



Today SNP MPs were again unable to confirm what Scottish agricultural policy will look like after we leave the European Union, and when Scottish farmers can expect to know what it will look.

The Scottish Conservative have been calling on the SNP to publish their plans for agricultural policy post-Brexit but so far, the SNP have failed to give any detail or any time scale of when to expect an agricultural bill for Scotland.

At present, provision for farmers is secured until December 2020. Scottish Conservative MPs will publish amendments shortly that would include Scotland in the Agricultural Bill.

Commenting Scottish Conservative MP Colin Clark said:

“Today the SNP spent a lot of time calling for agricultural policy to meets the needs of Scotland, with which I agree. But they seem to have completely forgotten that agricultural policy is devolved to the Scottish Government.

“The rest of the UK are preparing future farming policy for when we leave the European Union, unlike the SNP lead Scottish Government who are dragging their heels.

“Mr Wishart mentioned in the debate we should expect an agricultural bill, but Nicola Sturgeon failed to mention it in her Programme for Government or in her conference speech this week.

“SNP proposals for Scottish agricultural policy are as clear as mud.

“Farmers in Scotland are still completely in the dark over the issue; it is time they received some clarity from the SNP.”

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10 Oct 2018



On World Mental Health Day, the Scottish Government’s progress towards recruiting key mental health co-ordinators, known as Community Link Workers, has been described as ‘glacial’.

The Scottish Government pledged to recruit 250 Community Link Workers to work in GP surgeries by the end of the parliamentary session.

Community Link Workers connect people to non-medical sources of support or resources in the community which are likely to help with their health problems. They are equipped to deal with a wide range of issues however, they are expected to be of particular benefit to people who have mental health issues.

Figures outlined in a written answer to Annie Wells, Scottish Conservative mental health spokesman, show that only 56 directly funded community link workers are currently in post, indeed, only three have been recruited in the last nine months.

With a target of 250 community link workers to meet by the end of the parliamentary session, the Scottish Government will need to employ 194 more workers by the next election, or over 60 per year.

However, at their current rate of progress, the SNP will miss their own target by 140 workers.

Worryingly, of the Community Link Workers already in post over half are on fixed term contracts suggesting that the funding for these important positions is not secure.

Annie Wells Scottish Conservative mental health spokesman said:

“Today is World Mental Health Day and we are reminded of the importance of

having resources in place to support those suffering from mental ill health and social isolation.

“The progress the SNP are making towards this important target really is glacial.

“The SNP is responsible for the longest ever waiting times on mental health.

“The SNP talk a good game on mental health but this demonstrates that they are missing crucial actions that would make a fundamental difference to patients.

“The SNP must act urgently to recruit Community Link Workers and ensure that they are in place on permanent contracts.”

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New Freedom of Information responses have revealed that nurseries fear the SNP’s botched plan to expand childcare is “about to implode.”

In other emails sent to local authorities and the Scottish Government, nurseries have said that SNP plans to rollout 1140 hours of childcare by 2020 are leaving private childcare providers ‘literally on their knees’.

In the past few months, numerous childcare providers have written to the Scottish Government to warn that the expansion plan is not being properly funded and will drive them out of business.

Among those who have also raised concerned with the Scottish Government include SNP minister Kate Forbes, and SNP MSP Alex Neil.

The documents released today also include a briefing by Scottish Government civil servants highlighting a range of private providers’ concerns including: lower rates paid to partner providers, a lack of engagement, a lack of access to capital funding, and a lack of involvement in the expansion to 1140 hours.

Lastly, issues have been raised most often at four local authorities as of 14 August 2018: the SNP-run Glasgow council, the SNP-run South Lanarkshire

council, the Labour-run North Lanarkshire council and the SNP-Labour run South Ayrshire council.

Alison Harris, Scottish Conservative children and young people spokesman said:

“This childcare expansion was launched to huge fanfare but it is clearer by the day that the SNP has no ability to deliver it.

“The SNP cannot deliver this policy without childcare providers and they are telling us that they cannot survive on the current rates.

“The SNP is driving nurseries to breaking point due to low rates, lack of engagement and lack of access to capital funding.

“The SNP must sort out this mess urgently or childcare providers will be driven out of business and parents relying on this policy will be devastated.”