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- Calls for Mackay to announce Scottish budget by mid-November

26 Sep 2018



The Scottish Conservatives are calling on the SNP finance secretary Derek Mackay to bring his budget forward to mid-November to allow more time for parliamentary scrutiny.

Phillip Hammond announced today that the UK budget will be revealed on Monday the 29th of October.

This means if the same three-week period between Scottish and UK budgets was used as in previous years, then the SNP should bring their budget to Holyrood on the 20th of November.

This would allow more time for the budget to be debated and scrutinised, unlike last year when Holyrood went into recess shortly after the SNP's spending plans were revealed.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser MSP said:

"With Philip Hammond having announced his budget date, it means that Derek Mackay can let us know when he plans to announce the SNP's spending plans.

"Three weeks is more than enough time to prepare his budget, which means he should be revealing his budget by mid-November.

"This would allow Parliament to have far more time to analyse his budget, as opposed in previous years when we've had barely any time to study it before recess.

"Any attempt from Derek Mackay to delay his budget beyond this date could only be seen as an attempt to try and avoid thorough parliamentary scrutiny."

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- SNP's mental health strategy letting down patients

25 Sep 2018



The Scottish Conservatives have accused the Scottish Government of threatening to abandon mental health waiting times without putting in place any alternative monitoring procedures.

The SNP's new mental health minister Claire Haughey provided a progress report on the SNP Government's mental health strategy to the Scottish Parliament this afternoon but failed to address this point.

Scottish Conservative Mental Health spokesperson Annie Wells highlighted that Scotland currently has the worst waiting times for children's mental health on record, with those services also being described as fragmented.

The Scottish Conservatives have therefore called on the SNP to outline concrete plans on how they intend to deliver real improvements for patients.

Annie Wells MSP, Scottish Conservative mental health spokesman said:

"The SNP has totally failed to outline how they plan to improve mental health services across the country.

"Right now patients, especially our children and young people, are being let down by a lack of a coherent strategy.

"While many of the commitments to mental health are welcome, we need to hear more on how the plans for counsellors in our schools will be fully delivered.

"If the SNP wants to move away from waiting times statistics, they must clearly outline how they will monitor how quickly vulnerable patients are being treated.

"The SNP is responsible for the longest ever waiting times for children needing to access mental health support. They cannot simply dismiss these damning statistics."

Ruth welcomes PM's 'unequivocal' approach to UK integrity

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- Ruth welcomes PM's 'unequivocal' approach to UK integrity

21 Sep 2018



Ruth Davidson has given her backing to Prime Minister Theresa May following Brexit talks in Austria.

The Scottish Conservative leader welcomed the fact she was “unequivocal on the importance of the integrity of the United Kingdom” and that she was committed to negotiating in “good faith”.

She also praised Mrs May for giving assurances to EU citizens living in Britain that their rights will remain intact, even in the event of no deal.

Ruth spoke to the Prime Minister this afternoon, and urged EU countries to “reciprocate” that good faith as the negotiations go on.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“The Prime Minister has been unequivocal on the importance of the integrity of the United Kingdom and stated that no measures should be allowed to effectively divide our country in two. I agree.

“She has reaffirmed her commitment to negotiating in good faith and respecting our friends and allies in Europe.

“As we seek to find a way through the current impasse, I hope such good faith and respect will be reciprocated.

“It is in everyone’s interest for a deal to be agreed between the UK and the EU, to facilitate free trade and mutual co-operation.

“I do not wish for the UK to leave the EU without such a deal.

“However, I am pleased that the Prime Minister has given categorical reassurance to EU citizens living in Britain that, should such a scenario come to pass, their rights remain intact.

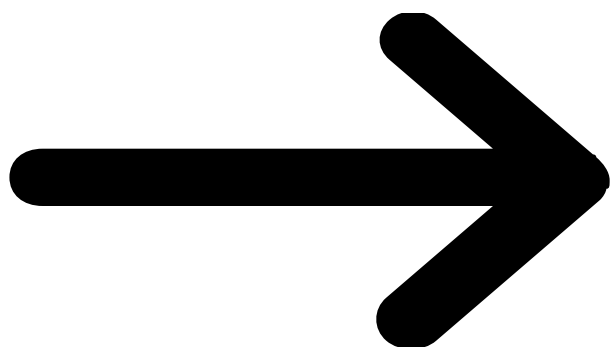
“I have spoken to the Prime Minister following this afternoon’s statement, and welcome her commitment to continue working to resolve this impasse ahead of October’s European Council.

“There is still time to agree a deal on the future relationship between the

UK and the EU. My wish is for all sides to return to negotiations in order to deliver one.”

Labour's Leonard must rule out indyref2

21 Sep 2018



Richard Leonard, Labour's leader in Scotland, has been challenged to stand-up to Jeremy Corbyn's policy of handing the SNP another independence referendum.

Yesterday, Mr Corbyn said he'd be happy to grant the nationalists another separation vote if he was Prime Minister.

That's a direct contradiction of Labour's 2017 manifesto, and now Mr Leonard has been told to distance himself from the comments, and stand up for Scotland's No voters.

It's not the first time Mr Corbyn – who failed to campaign to keep Britain together during the 2014 referendum – has been weak on Scotland's place in the UK.

The Scottish Conservatives said this concession was another opportunity for Mr Leonard make a stand against the UK party leader, especially after he failed to speak out on anti-semitism.

Scottish Conservative deputy leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Jeremy Corbyn's weak admission that he wants the SNP to have another independence vote is a direct contradiction of Labour's 2017 manifesto.

“Richard Leonard has to now clarify what his party's position on this vital matter is.

“Is he going to stand up for the majority of Scots who want to keep the UK together, or is he too afraid to go against the wishes of his boss in London?

“Richard Leonard’s silence on anti-semitism was embarrassing – he cannot afford to repeat that mistake when it comes to keeping Scotland in the UK.

“He needs to get on the phone to Jeremy Corbyn, and tell him to toughen up his stance straight away.”

[Almost 4,000 missed breast cancer screening invitations in 2016](#)

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- Almost 4,000 missed breast cancer screening invitations in 2016

20 Sep 2018



Figures have emerged that in 2016 thousands of women in Scotland were not sent breast screening invitations as a result of an ‘adverse event’ within the National Services Division.

This is despite SNP assurances in May 2018 that no Scottish women had missed breast cancer screening and the subsequent reassurance, in September, that only 1,800 women had, indeed, missed the screening last year.

In December 2016 a report published by Healthcare Improvement Scotland identified that 3,831 women had not been sent a routine invitation for breast screening.

It states: “The report reviews the management of adverse events, which included the identification of 3,831 women who had not been sent a routine invitation to be screened.”

Jamie Greene MSP asked the First Minister in Holyrood today about the identification of the error, and the recommendations from the review, one of which was better oversight of the new IT system.

Mr Greene asked; “So can I ask why was the 2016 recommendation ignored? And what reassurances can she give that the screening programme IT system is fit for purpose?”

The First Minister responded that these were unrelated issues.

Scottish Conservative MSP Jamie Greene said:

“The SNP clearly doesn’t have a grip on this situation.

"The former Health Secretary assured the Scottish Parliament and the public that no Scottish women had missed crucial breast screening appointments.

"Four months later we were assured that only 1,800 women had in fact been missed, and now we find out that a further 3,800 were not sent screening invitations in 2016 due to computer error.

"This will not reassure women across Scotland.

"The SNP must now ensure the system is fit for purpose and ensure that no other women have missed these vital screenings."