

WASPI Women face 'double whammy' from the Tories

The Tories have delivered a 'double whammy' to women born in the 1950s by raising the state pension age from 60 to 66 with no transitional arrangements, while telling women to go to job centres they are now closing.

Guy Opperman, the Pensions Minister, asked the women effected by the pensions change to seek out apprenticeships to get older people into work.

Meanwhile, the UK government is closing 70 job centres across the UK, including ten in Scotland.

It is therefore no surprise the Minister was met with cries of 'shame' during a Westminster Hall debate yesterday.

This is callous attack on women nearing retirement age from the Tory government.

The WASPI women have already been treated appallingly by the Tories. Frankly, the comments from the Pensions Minister are nothing short of an insult while the government closes job centres across the country.

And just yesterday we found out the Tories plan to increase the state pension age even further – a policy that wasn't in their manifesto of misery during the election – meaning 34 million people across Britain will have to work longer than under Labour's plan.

Scottish Labour has long supported the WASPI women's campaign and opposes the job centre closures. It's clear that only Labour will protect pensioners as part of our plan to create a society that works for the many, not the few.

SNP must act to reduce childcare costs – Johnson

A Family and Childcare Trust [survey published today](#) has revealed childcare

costs in Scotland are higher than the UK average.

It is deeply concerning that childcare throughout the summer holidays costs almost £300 more in Scotland than it did ten years ago.

Families face enough difficulties with the cost of living, without having to pay over the odds for childcare as well.

Most local authorities in Scotland were unable to even say whether or not they had enough childcare for parents working full time.

In England and Wales, councils have a legal obligation to make sure there is sufficient childcare for working parents – and Scottish Labour wants the SNP to replicate this in Scotland.

A change in the law could bring holiday childcare costs in Scotland in line with the rest of the UK and make a real difference to families.

[Tory plans to close Jobcentres must be stopped](#)

Theresa May plans to close Jobcentres across the country is cutting a lifeline for out-of-work Scots.

Shadow Scotland Office Minister Paul Sweeney challenged the Prime Minister in Parliament this afternoon on the proposal to close ten centres across Scotland, including six in Glasgow.

Paul Sweeney said the plans are perverse, given the impact on some of the most deprived areas of the country, with some of the highest rates of unemployment.

Speaking earlier in Scotland Questions, he also called on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to explore the option of consolidating services to create “one-stop shops” in the same location, incorporating council and community services.

In Glasgow, unemployment has consistently been higher than the national average, child poverty is rising, and the use of foodbanks has increased.

The closures will lead to increased travel times and more expensive journeys, resulting in missed appointments and a potential increase in the number of people being sanctioned. It is therefore imperative the government publishes an equality impact assessment

The DWP should also give urgent consideration to consolidating local services to create 'one-stop shops' in the same location.

It is now absolutely clear that only Labour is committed to helping people across the entire UK to find decent and secure work. We will create an economy that works for the many, not the few.

[Tories must end public sector pay cap](#)

The Tories and SNP have failed to stand up for our public sector workers.

Shadow Scottish Secretary Lesley Laird used the first Scottish Questions since the election today to tell the Tories they are in 'complete chaos' on the future of the unfair public sector pay cap.

Chancellor Philip Hammond has reportedly said public sector workers are 'overpaid' – a statement which Scottish Secretary David Mundell failed to condemn this afternoon.

The SNP is unfortunately no better than the Tories after Nicola Sturgeon's MSPs voted against lifting the cap for NHS workers.

Public sector pay restraint has been in place since 2010 and previous research from the independent Scottish Parliament Information Centre shows that the average nurse is £3,400 worse off.

In May, SNP MSPs voted against a Labour motion in the Scottish Parliament to scrap the pay cap for NHS staff, while the SNP's own submission to the NHS pay review body recommended a 1 per cent overall cost cap this year. But SNP Finance Secretary Derek Mackay has since performed a U-turn following Labour pressure.

Of the total 542,200 people employed in the public sector in Scotland, 89.5 per cent are accounted for by employment in the devolved public sector. The Tory government is responsible for the vast majority of pay rates for workers in the reserved sector.

Labour would choose a different path from the Tories and the SNP.

Scottish Labour has said our dedicated NHS workers deserve a pay rise right now.

We would abolish the public sector pay cap and put an end to the low paid economy for all workers with a £10 minimum wage. Only Labour has a plan to create a country that works for the many, not the few.

Private NHS spending almost £600 million under SNP

Almost £600 million has been spent on private agency staff under the SNP, it was revealed today.

Figures show spending on clinical and non-clinical agency staff has soared from £82million in 2011/12 to a staggering £175million in 2015/16 – an increase of 113 per cent.

A new analysis by Scottish Labour reveals the total spend since 2011/12 is £597million.

These figures show the extent of the SNP's mismanagement of our NHS, leaving staff under-valued and under-resourced.

At the same time as refusing to give our NHS staff a pay rise, Nicola Sturgeon is forking out hundreds of millions of pounds to private companies because of her failure to workforce plan.

It makes a mockery of SNP claims to protect our valued NHS and is simply not good enough – staff and patients deserve better.

Nicola Sturgeon and her ministers need to get back to the day job of fixing the mess they have made of our health service.

Scottish Labour is establishing a workforce commission to address the SNP's staffing crisis in our NHS.

And we would abolish the public sector pay cap, giving our NHS staff the pay rise they deserve.

A Labour government would also massively increase the money available to be spent in our NHS by ensuring those at the top pay their fair share in tax. Only Labour can create a country that works for the many, not the few.