

Teachers should be exempt from SNP car park tax

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Teachers should be exempt from paying the SNP's new car park tax in the same way NHS workers are, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

In yesterday's budget, finance secretary Derek Mackay outlined plans to charge hundreds of pounds a year to firms whose staff took their car to work.

He said health service staff wouldn't be affected by this charge, which was one of many punitive conditions of the SNP winning Green support for the budget.

Now shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser has argued – if the SNP government is insistent on ploughing ahead with the controversial plan – that teachers should also be removed from it.

He said this was particularly important if ministers wanted to agree a pay deal with teaching unions, in the face of recent threats of industrial action.

In addition, he urged the Scottish Government to start speaking to smaller firms to see how these extra levies would work and what impact they would have.

A similar pilot scheme in Nottingham resulted in charges of more than £400 a year for workers who drove to work.

The car park tax was part of a triple-tax bombshell unveiled yesterday, alongside the widening of the tax gap between Scotland and the rest of the UK, and further council tax rises.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“If the SNP wants to crash ahead with this unpopular and ridiculous car park tax plan, the least it could do is exempt teachers.

“The nationalists find themselves in an absurd position of negotiating a pay rise for teachers, while threatening to charge them hundreds of pounds a year for the sake of driving to work.

“That will jeopardise current negotiations with unions, and could lead to

them coming good on the industrial action they've recently threatened.

"If Derek Mackay thinks NHS workers are worthy of exemptions, then so too are teachers.

"As a matter of urgency, the SNP government also needs to start speaking to smaller firms who could be badly hit by this nonsense tax.

"It needs to establish how this levy will work and what impact it will have on this important part of our economy."