

# The SNP – Delayed, dithering and distracted from the day-job

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**Delayed, dithering and distracted from the day-job – what the SNP have got up to this year**

**1. It is now 500 days since the last Suicide Prevention Strategy expired.** The previous Suicide Prevention Strategy covered the period 2013-16 and set out a range of commitments under 5 broad themes: Responding to people in distress; Talking about suicide; Improving the NHS response to suicide; Developing the evidence base; and Supporting change and improvement. They are currently seeking views on themes and draft actions for possible inclusion in the new Action Plan aimed at continuing the downward trend in suicides in Scotland, however (*Scottish Government*, 6 March 2018, [Link](#)).

**2. The Safe Staffing Bill was introduced 2 years after being promised.** The Bill was pledged in the SNP's 2016 manifesto, but was only published last month. "A row erupted over claims an NHS staffing law has been delayed due to Holyrood being bogged down in EU wrangles" (*The Sun*, 13 March 2018, [Link](#)).

**3. The SNP were forced to delay their ill-conceived BTP Merger.** After insisting they could merge the British Transport Police into Police Scotland by April 2019, the SNP were forced to delay the project indefinitely following multiple safety warnings from police and railway experts. They now say they'll press ahead on a revised timetable, despite the fact 8 in 10 BTP officers and staff oppose integration. (*BBC News*, 20 February 2018, [link](#); *STV News*, 21 February 2018, [link](#)).

**4. The SNP has been forced to delay Welfare devolution.** After demanding powers over welfare, the SNP Government had to ask the UK Government earlier this year to keep control of disability benefits for an extra year. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/snp-ask-tories-keep-control-12280713>

**5. The SNP are delaying on a new offence of drug driving.** The SNP promised a new offence of drug driving to come into force in 2019, but the necessary legislation has not yet been brought forward. (*Scottish Government*, *Programme for Government 2017-18*, p 15, [link](#)).

**6. The SNP have completely failed to deliver their much-vaunted £500 million Scottish Growth Scheme.** Scottish Conservative FOIs found that the 2017-18 and 2018-19 Budgets only allocate £25 million to the Scottish Growth Scheme. It was supposed to be a £500 million, three-year plan. After two years, the most the SNP can deliver to businesses is only £25 million. They have also failed to deliver a single penny of loans and guarantees, which it was originally established to provide (FOI response, 17 April 2018; *The Times*, 11 March

2018, [link](#)).

**7. The £36 million Digital Growth Fund was delayed a year and only £2 million delivered.** At the SNP conference in March 2017, Sturgeon the £36 million Digital Growth Fund. The SNP only started releasing this money in late June 2018, more than 15 months after it was announced. They have only announced £2 million of the £36 million promised (SNP.org, 18 March 2017, [link](#); Scottish Parliament, Written Answers, 7 June 2018, [link](#)).

**8. Scottish Enterprise went into 2018 without a business plan.** When the plan was finally delivered, it was only a temporary one-year plan, and it was only 16 pages compared to 36 the year previously (*Scottish Sun*, 7 April 2018, [link](#)).

**9. The Pledge to double SDI staff was delayed.** Sturgeon recently repeated that: 'SDI is doubling its representatives in Europe'. That pledge was made almost two years ago at the 2016 SNP conference. In November, we found that the pledge to double SDI staff had resulted in just one new appointment. The SNP have refused to disclose the latest numbers in separate FOI and PQs (Scottish Conservatives, [link](#); SNP.org, [link](#); SNP.org, [link](#)).

**10. The pledge to open Brussels hub by Autumn 2017 missed by at least six months.** They delayed opening by six months from autumn 2017 to spring 2018 – then Keith Brown said it may be summer before it opens (*The Times*, 27 December 2017, [link](#); Scottish Parliament, [link](#)).

**11. The pledge to open Berlin hub by 2017 missed by at least three months.** It was supposed to open in 2017 but didn't open until February 2018. At which point, it temporarily opened within the British Embassy in Berlin (Scottish Government, *Programme for Government*, p.51, September 2017, [link](#)).

**12. It took more than a year for trade envoys to be appointed.** The trade envoys were originally announced in October 2016 but were not appointed until November 2017 (*Sunday Post*, 16 July 2017, [link](#); Scottish Government, 30 November 2017, [link](#)).

**13. The SNP Government have missed five of their main economic targets by a total of £80 billion.** The SNP have failed to meet five of their main economic targets: to match UK GDP growth rates; to match GDP growth rates of small EU nations; to reach the first OECD quartile for productivity; to increase exports by 50 per cent; and to increase R&D spending to the EU average (*The Scotsman*, 8 May 2018, [link](#)).

**14. Named Persons has been subject to repeated delays.** After the Supreme Court decision, in September 2016 Swinney announced that named persons would be implemented by August 2017 (*The Guardian*, 8 September 2016, [link](#)). In March 2017, the scheme was further delayed with an aim for the bill to go before the chamber by the end of 2017, and rolled out in 2018 (*BBC News*, 7 March 2017, [link](#)). In December 2017, the Education and Skills Committee refused to move the bill forward, with Swinney saying that a draft code of practice could not be produced until September 2018 at the earliest (*BBC News*, 6 December 2017, [link](#)). MSPs then voted unanimously to annul the 22 December

deadline for the legislation's passage. There are no plans to reintroduce the bill as it stands (*The Scotsman*, 13 December 2017, [link](#)).

**15. The Warm Homes Bill** had two consultations – the First Consultation completed 1 February 2018 second consultation began on 2 May 2018 ([link](#)).

**16. The SNP announced in its Programme for Government that it would invest £1 million in each of the next five years in the Edinburgh Festival – but has yet to spend it.** 'And, as announced in August, we are establishing a fund to provide £1 million in each of the next five years for Edinburgh's Festivals to maintain its status as the world's foremost festival city' (Scottish Government, *Programme For Government 2017-18* , p119, [link](#)). As of 25 June, just one month before the start of the festival, this fund has not paid out any money as the Scottish Government, Edinburgh Council and Festivals Edinburgh are still 'developing application criteria for the fund'. The fund now titled the Funding for 'Creative Excellence' has still not even had its application criteria worked out meaning that applications have not yet been received and that it is unlikely that it will pay out any money for this years' festival.