

Grounds for indyref2 have 'collapsed'

15 Mar 2017



The Scottish Conservatives have said the justification for a second referendum on independence has “collapsed” following SNP admissions it has dumped plans for immediate EU membership.

In reports today, SNP sources confirmed that an independent Scotland would no longer seek to apply to become a member of EU after a vote for separation.

This is despite the fact that Nicola Sturgeon has used the decision to leave the European Union as a reason for holding another divisive referendum on independence – and has consistently said her plan is to apply for EU membership.

It comes as new polls today reveal that support for independence has fallen.

The same poll shows that only 35 per cent of people want the SNP to spend the next two years diverting attention away from the day job and on another referendum campaign.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“Nicola Sturgeon’s grounds for a referendum have simply given way beneath her.

“We are told an immediate referendum campaign is necessary because we are leaving the European Union.

“Yet the SNP is u-turning on immediate EU membership and saying Scotland wouldn’t seek to become a member.

“If European Union membership is the reason for a referendum, what is the point of holding one if the plan isn’t go back in?

“Nicola Sturgeon’s reckless referendum plan has collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions.

“As even the SNP acknowledges, the UK union is by far Scotland’s most important market place and partner.

“Independence would wreck that union. It is time for the SNP to stop the games, and get back to the day job it has ignored for the last 10 years.”

It was reported today that the SNP no longer wants to immediately reapply for EU membership in the event of independence:

[Swinney claims North Sea oil was merely an independence 'bonus'](#)

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- Swinney claims North Sea oil was merely an independence 'bonus'

9 Mar 2017



Oil was never the basis for the Scottish economy, but merely a bonus, the Deputy First Minister claimed today.

The admission exposes a split at the top of the SNP in the same week its top financial adviser Andrew Wilson said the complete opposite, and that the nationalists had depended on oil revenues for their financial projections.

Today at First Minister's Questions, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson challenged Mr Swinney – who was standing in for Nicola Sturgeon – on the contradiction.

However, he refused to explain the differences in opinion, and also dodged the issue of a fresh SNP drive for separation.

It was reported this morning that Nicola Sturgeon regards the autumn of 2018 as the "common sense" time for a referendum re-run.

This is despite repeated polls showing people don't want it, and little movement in polls Ms Sturgeon said would need to shift significantly before she called another referendum.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"It may have been a new face in the First Minister's seat, but the bluster was the same as ever.

"We now have a very stark contradiction at the heart of the SNP.

"Its chief financial adviser says oil was the basis on which a separate Scotland would have been built.

"But the Deputy First Minister says it was merely planned as a bonus.

“They can’t both be right, and this contradiction exposes that the entire economic prospectus on which the SNP based its case for independence was bogus.

“Nicola Sturgeon thinks it’s ‘common sense’ to have another divisive and unwanted referendum next year.

“But most Scots don’t want to go back to that division and uncertainty, and most think this irresponsible talk will only damage Scotland’s economy further.

“That’s the kind of common sense the SNP should be deploying.”

SNP strategy chief Andrew Wilson said oil was in fact the “basis” for his party’s independence plans in 2014. This is despite John Swinney previously saying it wasn’t the basis, but “a bonus”:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/03/never-mind-indyref2-snp-must-own-up-to-the-lies-of-indyref1/>

Nicola Sturgeon said today 2018 would be the “common sense” time for another referendum:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/09/nicola-sturgeon-autumn-2018-common-sense-time-second-independence/>

[OBR figures show SNP oil assertions were “a tissue of lies”](#)

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- OBR figures show SNP oil assertions were “a tissue of lies”

8 Mar 2017



The OBR has today cut its forecast for oil and gas receipts in its latest publication today.

Prior to the 2014 independence referendum, the SNP claimed it would receive revenues of up to £11.8 billion in 2017-18.

The OBR today estimates actual revenues for that year at £0.9 billion.

Estimated revenues for all the next four years have been revised down since

the OBR's last report in November.

Scottish Conservative finance spokesman Murdo Fraser said:

"These are troubling figures which only serve to reinforce the current fragility of Scotland's oil and gas sector – and shows why the support announced by the UK Government today is so necessary.

"It also throws the SNP's deception on oil prior to the independence referendum into stark relief.

"The SNP knew their oil forecasts were based on fantasy figures but they tried to fool people anyway. Their oil con has now been exposed for the tissue of lies it was.

"The head of Nicola Sturgeon's Growth Commission, Andrew Wilson, has admitted this week that oil receipts were part of their spending plans, and not a bonus.

"Nicola Sturgeon and John Swinney have gone into hiding over this scandal.

"They must now admit they were wrong, and spell out how they would fill Scotland's £15bn deficit in the event we voted for independence."

<http://cdn.budgetresponsibility.org.uk/March2017EF0-231.pdf>

[£350m budget bonanza for Scotland means no need for SNP tax hikes](#)

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- £350m budget bonanza for Scotland means no need for SNP tax hikes

8 Mar 2017



The additional £350 million coming to Scotland as a result of today's budget means the SNP does not need to hike people's taxes, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Thanks to decisions made by Chancellor Philip Hammond, Scotland will receive the extra cash through Barnett Consequentials, including an additional £100 million for this coming year alone.

That – together with extra funds finance secretary Derek Mackay found in his own budget dealings totalling more than £230 million – means the Scottish Government has significantly more money for 2017/18 than it previously thought.

Shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said that means there's now no need for the SNP to make Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK, and should relieve some of its cuts to public services too.

As part of today's budget, Mr Hammond confirmed the personal allowance would increase to £12,500, which takes 113,000 people out of tax altogether in Scotland.

Fuel duty will be frozen for the seventh year on the trot, which could save the average driver £10 every time they fill up at the pump.

And more support was announced for the north east with the creation of an expert group to look at helping the oil and gas industry.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“The Chancellor has struck the right balance in this budget – keeping money in reserve as we prepare to leave the EU, but at the same time handing a boost to the economy.

“For Scotland alone, his plans will deliver an extra £350 million for the SNP government to spend as it wishes over the coming years.

“The SNP's double dose of local government cuts and income tax changes to penalise middle-earners is now utterly without justification.

“The simple truth is that, if it was focused on the day job, the SNP wouldn't need to make Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK.

“With even more spending power now at its disposal, a competent government could give taxpayers a break and find the cash to support social care and schools across Scotland.

“The question facing the SNP is this – if Philip Hammond can support public services while protecting family pay packets, why can't Derek Mackay?”

Below are additional comments from Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, who was speaking at a Scottish Property Federation conference this afternoon:

“My message to the Scottish Government is this.

“As I said earlier, despite the Chancellor's cautious approach on spending, his budget this afternoon means that the Scottish Government now has £350 million extra to spend over the coming years.

“That includes £100 million to spend in the next financial year alone.

“This is extra cash that the SNP had not planned for in its budget.

“With this extra money, the finance secretary’s claim that council cuts and tax rises are necessary has therefore been substantially eroded.

“So I hope that the SNP will use this extra resource to support councils which require it, and give taxpayers and businesses a break.

“We simply do not need to send out the message that higher taxes are necessary in Scotland.

“I urge the SNP to think again.”

[Children face longest ever wait for ear, nose and throat appointments](#)

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8 Mar 2017



Children in Scotland are waiting longer now for ear, nose and throat (ENT) appointments than ever before, new figures have shown.

The median wait for first specialist appointments for conditions like tonsillitis, nosebleeds and hearing problems was 71 days last year.

That’s the highest since records began in 1999, and compares to 66 days in 2015, and as little as 44 days in 2011.

In some health boards, under 16s wait far longer.

The longest median wait was in Grampian (133 days), followed by Ayrshire and Arran (131 days) and Shetland (120 days).

The best-performing board for ENT waits was Dumfries and Galloway, where youngsters waited on average for just 43 days.

The statistics emerged following a parliamentary question from Scottish Conservative public health spokesman Miles Briggs.

Across Scotland, more than 10,000 children are admitted to hospital for ENT problems each year, mostly on an elective basis.

Conditions which come under ENT range from mouth cancers and glandular fever, to issues with snoring and vertigo.

Scottish Conservative public health spokesman Miles Briggs said:

“Ear, nose and throat problems can range from the mildly irritating to the very severe.

“But that’s no excuse for the Scottish Government to preside over a system which is now recording the longest waits in two decades.

“Each year thousands of children are admitted with ENT problems, so it is not a minority area of care.

“When a child is referred for hospital treatment, it is unacceptable that – in some health board areas – it is almost five months before they are seen to.

“The trend is getting worse, and the SNP has to act.

“It’s in sole charge of the health service, and has no-one to blame for this slip in performance but itself.”

The full text of the parliamentary question from Miles Briggs is below:

7 March 2017 (Holding Reply Issued 1 March 2017)

Index Heading: Health and Social Care

Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Scottish Conservatives and Unionist Party): To ask the Scottish Government what the average waiting time has been for (a) children and (b) adults to see an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist in each year since 1999, broken down by NHS board.

S5W-06782

Shona Robison:

The information requested is provided in the following tables. It should be noted that data prior to the introduction of New Ways of Defining and Measuring Waiting Times in 2008 is from Scottish Morbidity Records (SMR00) and are not directly comparable.

MEDIAN WAITS (DAYS) FOR A FIRST OUTPATIENT CONSULTATION IN ENT FOR PATIENTS UNDER 16 YEARS BY NHS BOARD FOR THE YEARS 1999 TO 2007

Board	Median Waits (Days) : Patients Age Under 16 Years									
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	
Ayrshire and Arran	30	25	45	43	46	49	70	76	47	
Borders	85	107	121	59	45	84	90	84	92	
Dumfries and Galloway	39	44	65	70	44	33	21	41	44	

Fife	84	61	64	79	82	90	70	70	46
Forth Valley	57	49	58	70	75	63	77	82	45
Grampian	70	71	76	73	82	59	65	93	48
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	69	61	70	68	111	40	52	86	53
Highland	46	46	58	57	55	47	59	85	100
Lanarkshire	73	72	93	104	117	75	67	92	95
Lothian	16	18	18	30	40	54	50	28	87
Orkney	24	31	33	49	42	53	50	69	76
Shetland	36	41	41	58	71	62	47	68	63
Tayside	49	54	66	55	50	52	43	44	43
Western Isles	78	45	49	52	72	121	124	105	95
NHSScotland	53	52	63	63	68	50	56	68	58

Source : ISD SMR00

MEDIAN WAITS (DAYS) FOR A FIRST OUTPATIENT CONSULTATION IN ENT FOR PATIENTS 16 YEARS AND OVER BY NHS BOARD FOR THE YEARS 1999 TO 2007

Board	Median Waits (Days): Patients Age 16 Years and Over								
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Ayrshire and Arran	49	49	73	50	56	107	85	70	40
Borders	67	72	53	35	35	48	46	49	76
Dumfries and Galloway	41	42	66	66	45	36	19	39	35
Fife	80	45	53	76	79	83	64	52	41
Forth Valley	54	49	54	62	63	68	73	62	42
Grampian	84	92	99	121	111	106	119	105	106
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	48	54	60	58	63	49	52	44	41
Highland	44	46	54	48	41	41	50	60	69
Lanarkshire	70	69	86	94	104	109	105	78	70
Lothian	69	63	61	65	55	57	63	66	84
Orkney	24	38	35	40	47	58	63	65	70
Shetland	40	40	42	47	52	62	36	46	60
Tayside	53	74	76	83	53	59	56	46	56
Western Isles	62	41	45	43	69	85	93	99	77
NHSScotland	56	56	63	66	64	61	62	56	53

Source : ISD SMR00

MEDIAN WAITS (DAYS) FOR A FIRST OUTPATIENT CONSULTATION IN ENT FOR PATIENTS UNDER 16 YEARS BY NHS BOARD FOR THE YEARS 2008 TO 2016

Board	Median Waits (Days) : Patients Aged Under 16 Years								
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Ayrshire and Arran	57	54	54	44	62	74	82	110	131
Borders	66	50	50	63	73	76	84	73	88

Dumfries and Galloway	38	42	44	21	38	44	40	40	43
Fife	42	40	44	36	37	42	41	42	47
Forth Valley	52	49	36	58	68	99	45	63	78
Grampian	66	55	72	81	74	63	60	108	133
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	45	48	53	40	42	50	55	60	69
Highland	81	61	52	56	62	80	87	118	88
Lanarkshire	48	24	44	76	80	77	75	70	81
Lothian	76	69	64	42	67	75	83	126	96
Orkney	59	57	44	41	30	54	57	67	51
Shetland	81	50	68	58	62	58	75	72	120
Tayside	36	37	52	49	46	50	56	60	68
Western Isles	77	45	57	59	49	85	66	39	63
NHSScotland	51	49	55	44	52	58	61	66	71

Source: ISD Waiting Times Warehouse

MEDIAN WAITS (DAYS) FOR A FIRST OUTPATIENT CONSULTATION IN ENT FOR PATIENTS 16 YEARS AND OVER BY NHS BOARD FOR THE YEARS 2008 TO 2016

Board	Median Waits (Days) : Patients Aged 16 years And Over								
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Ayrshire and Arran	53	47	56	65	78	73	82	78	57
Borders	53	38	36	43	55	61	74	62	46
Dumfries and Galloway	32	34	35	14	29	24	28	38	41
Fife	34	34	33	28	27	28	26	26	30
Forth Valley	51	42	31	44	58	83	40	55	66
Grampian	79	68	40	27	31	38	35	39	55
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	35	36	37	40	43	48	55	59	55
Highland	46	34	31	35	41	50	59	78	76
Lanarkshire	45	40	47	49	58	73	75	70	59
Lothian	48	45	54	35	51	70	49	52	42
Orkney	57	45	41	32	32	51	63	69	50
Shetland	71	44	60	54	58	45	74	62	84
Tayside	25	38	43	43	42	48	44	45	36
Western Isles	56	35	51	56	46	62	47	32	48
NHSScotland	43	41	41	37	43	49	49	51	49

Source: ISD Waiting Times Warehouse

In 2015/16, there were 10,052 admissions of under 18s in Scotland for ENT issues:

<http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Hospital-Care/Inpatient-and-Day-Case-Activity/>

A list of ENT conditions are set out here:

<http://patient.info/health/ear-nose-throat-mouth-1246>