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- Drop the double standards and get on with governing, SNP told

13 Dec 2018



The SNP has been told to focus on domestic responsibilities and end its hypocritical “abuse” of the UK Government.

Nicola Sturgeon has spent much of the last week issuing critical tweets and statements about matters outwith the responsibility of Holyrood, including the delayed vote on the Brexit deal.

This is despite dithering on her own constitutional dilemma for the best part of two years.

And at First Minister’s Questions today, Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw pointed out that even when progress in devolved areas was being made, it was actually due to UK Government policies, not the SNP’s.

He highlighted a tax cut trumpeted by Derek Mackay in yesterday’s budget, £130 of which is thanks to Chancellor Philip Hammond’s decisions, and just 49p due to SNP measures.

Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Expert organisations and even her own budget documents show block grant investment from Westminster is going up.

“The only person who can’t accept this is Nicola Sturgeon.

“Scotland is in the slow lane under the SNP.

“While the UK Chancellor is committing to tax cuts for hardworking families, the nationalists’ policies provide them with enough extra cash for a packet of crisps.

“Instead of governing for Scotland, the First Minister is intent on hurling abuse from the sidelines.

“Stoking up indignation to a delayed vote in Westminster when she’s spent her entire time as First Minister dangling Scotland over the cliff of another independence referendum.

“It’s the double standards and hypocrisy for which this SNP government has

become renowned.”

[Tax hikes the SNP doesn't need to impose](#)

12 Dec 2018



The SNP government has been blasted for imposing new tax hikes on Scottish workers when it doesn't need to do so.

Finance secretary Derek Mackay said today he was worsening the tax gulf between Scotland and the rest of the UK by refusing to increase the personal allowance, in stark contrast to his counterpart in Westminster.

It means the divergence which was strongly warned against by business leaders has increased, which risks damaging growth and driving away wealth.

And the SNP's own Fiscal Commission admitted today these changes would “start to affect taxpayer behaviour”, both on how many hours to work and “tax residency decisions”.

Shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said the rises weren't even needed, after the UK Government pledged £950 million in additional spending through the Barnett formula.

After today's budget statement, families right across the country will be worse off in comparison to the UK equivalents.

As of next year, people earning £40,000 will be £130 worse off, increasing to a gap of nearly £500 for those on £45,000.

People making £50,000 will pay £1500 more in tax than their counterparts in the UK.

Despite claims of tax cuts for the low paid, this will equate to a saving of just £20 a year for those earning between £15,000 and £20,000.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

“In advance of today's budget, every business representative group in Scotland had one key ask of the SNP.

“That was to ensure that the tax differential between here and the rest of the UK would not increase.

“But the nationalists have ignored those calls today, penalising hardworking families right across the country.

“It seems the expert warnings that a growing divergence would make it harder to recruit talented people across both the private and public sector have been roundly ignored.

“That’s the price of living in the SNP’s Scotland.

“And yet none of this was necessary – there was absolutely no need for more SNP tax rises.

“UK Chancellor Philip Hammond delivered an additional £950 million in Barnett Consequentials in his last budget.

“The SNP government should have used that instead of further raiding the pockets of Scotland’s workers.”

[Only a quarter of drink spiking crimes are detected](#)

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6 Dec 2018



Only a quarter of reported crimes of drink spiking for sexual purposes are being detected, according to the latest figures obtained by the Scottish Conservatives.

The Freedom of Information response shows that 21 crimes of drugging and administering a substance for sexual purpose have been recorded so far this year, however, only 4 of them have been detected.

On the day that Girls Against Spiking has been launched, to campaign for lids on drinks, the Scottish Conservatives have highlighted the disparity between the figures and stated that the reported crimes could be the ‘tip of the iceberg’.

Annie Wells, Scottish Conservative spokesman on public health said:

“It is extremely worrying to see any crimes of drugging for sexual purposes are still occurring year on year, and potentially increasing.

“We know that the level of reporting of these crimes is low, so this could be just the tip of the iceberg.

“Of an even greater concern, is the low level of detection rate for these very serious crimes, which have absolutely devastating effects on the victims.

“Victims must be encouraged to come forward, and these are crimes that must be rooted out across our communities.

“Police Scotland must have the resources it needs in order to catch those who carry out these serious offences.”

And, on the launch of Girls Against Spiking:

“I am pleased to see the launch of this very important initiative which has brought together many important stakeholders including the Police and Strathclyde University.

“We need to be looking at a number of measures which can stop drink spiking altogether, one of which is the measure to put plastic lids on drinks in our pubs and clubs, so this a very positive step in the right direction.

“The figures show that a number of crimes relating to drugging for sexual purposes are still occurring year on year, with the detection rates worryingly low.

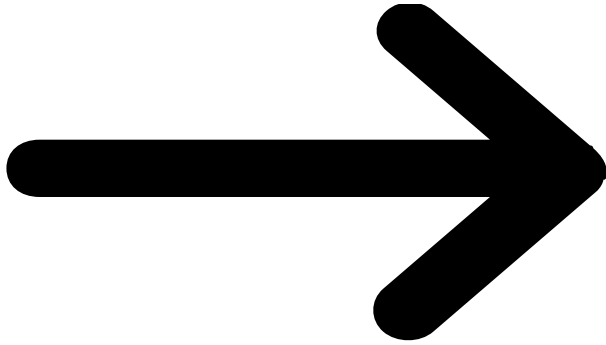
“Drink spiking has an absolutely devastating effect on victims and I hope that initiatives like Girls Against Spiking can help bring about an urgently needed reduction in the amount of crimes relating to this.

“By working closely together, I believe we can help to root out drink spiking and ensure that people do not have to suffer the awful consequences of these crimes.”

[Sturgeon must resist ‘needless’ tax increases](#)

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6 Dec 2018



Nicola Sturgeon has been urged to resist hiking up taxes even further on workers and businesses ahead of next week's Holyrood budget.

At First Minister's Questions today, Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said more than enough money had arrived thanks to recent Barnett Formula dividends from Westminster.

As a result, he said the SNP government should heed the advice of business leaders and commit to no further increases in tax.

He highlighted the plight of the Capercaillie restaurant in Stirlingshire, which recently went up for sale after being told its business rates would rocket by £17,000 a year.

And he warned against following Green party policies – something the SNP would need to do to secure their budget support – of creating a new domestic tax for householders.

Instead, Barnett cash announced last month in the UK budget could be used to spare firms and workers any additional penalties.

Scottish Conservative interim leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Businesses across Scotland need support, and need it now.

“But faced with devastating increases in rates, how can the First Minister expect them to survive?

“In addition, she can't expect hardworking Scots to keep paying more in taxation.

“The Greens have made it clear, if they are to get the SNP's budget through the Scottish Parliament, they will demand a new taxation on households.

“But that's not what the people of Scotland need or want.

“Nicola Sturgeon has more money thanks to Westminster spending, and that means there is no need for needless tax hikes.

“The cash is there – the SNP now needs to do the right thing by taxpayers.”

[Scottish Conservatives to oppose 'grievance' Brexit motion](#)

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5 Dec 2018



The Scottish Conservatives will oppose the joint SNP, Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat motion in tomorrow's Holyrood Brexit debate.

Speaking ahead of the event, the party's constitution spokesman Adam Tomkins said the SNP and Greens were using the debate purely to manufacture more grievance as part of their drive for a second referendum on independence.

Labour and the Lib Dems were acting as the SNP's "little helpers", he added.

He said that the Scottish Conservatives will – alone in Scotland – stand up for the decisions made by people in the two referendums held in recent years: backing the decision of Scotland to remain in the UK, and the decision of the UK to leave the European Union.

Scottish Conservative constitution spokesman Adam Tomkins said:

"The Scottish Conservatives will, alone, oppose the motion set out by the SNP, Labour, Lib Dems and Greens today.

"We know what the SNP and Greens are trying to do with this needless debate – they want to use it to manufacture yet more grievance as part of their push for a second independence referendum.

"That Labour and the Liberal Democrats have once again fallen into line with the nationalists is disappointing but hardly surprising.

"It's a choice they've taken at every step since the Brexit referendum was held.

"Willie Rennie and Richard Leonard are Nicola Sturgeon's little helpers.

"The Scottish Conservatives are the only party committed to respecting the results of both referendums we have held in the last four years.

"That clear, democratic principle is one we will seek to uphold in the Scottish Parliament today, in defiance of the SNP's games."