

Someone injured every hour in Scotland's mental health wards

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30 Jul 2018



A person sustains an injury at a mental health unit in Scotland every hour, new figures obtained by the Scottish Conservatives have revealed.

According to the research, nearly 24 incidents a day are recorded in facilities right across the country.

It means, in 2017/18, there were 8519 incidents resulting in injury among staff, patients and even some visitors.

That compares to 9101 the previous year, and 8721 in 2015/16, bringing the three-year total to 26,341.

Scottish Conservative mental health spokeswoman Annie Wells said the statistics should help renew focus on improving mental health care in Scotland, creating a better environment for vulnerable patients and healthcare workers.

According to the Freedom of Information requests, incidents ranged from assaults and accidents such as falls and trips, to substance abuse and issues with absconding and patient transport.

Instances involving burns, hazardous liquids and infection control also occurred.

Scotland's largest health board, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, noted the most incidents last year (3232) followed by NHS Lothian (1679) and NHS Grampian (1335).

Scottish Conservative mental health spokeswoman Annie Wells said:

“Everyone accepts that mental health wards can be extremely challenging both for patients and staff and, as such, incidents involving injury are bound to occur.

“But at the same time, more clearly needs to be done to reduce the thousands which occur each year.

“All political parties agree that mental health deserves parity of esteem with physical health.

“But if that is to be the case, these units have to become safer for workers and patients, and clearly that will take a great deal of effort and focus.

“That requires the Scottish Government speaking to staff, experts and relevant charities to see what improvements can be made to reduce injuries in this vital part of our NHS.”

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28 Jul 2018



Pressure is growing on Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard to end his silence after another one of his councillors was embroiled in a row over anti-Semitism.

Scottish Labour councillor Mary Lockhart claimed that Jewish newspapers that criticised her party's position on anti-Semitism could be working on behalf of Mossad.

It came after Dundee councillor George McIrvine was criticised for sharing a post on Facebook that made reference to the Rothschild banking dynasty.

It's the latest in a series of rows involving the Labour party, who are still refusing to accept the International Holocaust's Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism and all the accompanying examples in full and without amendment.

Scottish Conservative MP Paul Masterton has called on Richard Leonard to finally end his silence on the abuse emanating from his party towards Jewish people.

Scottish Conservative MP for East Renfrewshire, Paul Masterton said:

“The anti-Semitic rhetoric that has been coming from the Scottish Labour party has been appalling, yet Richard Leonard has refused to break his silence.

“This week we once again had one of his councillors pedalling ignorant and horrific views on Jewish people, revealing the deep rooted problems that

Scottish Labour have on this issue.

“And yet despite this we have seen no action from Richard Leonard to show that he is either taking these issues seriously, or that he is trying to rid his party of these disgusting views.

“Every day that goes by without Leonard speaking out against this abuse is another day that this shameful episode will continue to dog his party.

“For the sake of the Jewish community and his party, Richard Leonard must come out of hiding and tackle this problem head on.”

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The total amount paid out by the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) in the Fiona McBride case was over £740,000, the Scottish Conservatives can reveal.

The SPA were forced to give the fingerprints expert £415,227 in compensation for ten years of lost earnings and pensions contributions when the Supreme Court ruled that she had been unfairly dismissed following her sacking after the Marion Ross murder case.

But information obtained through a Freedom of Information request revealed that in addition to this the SPA spent a total of £328,138 in relation to the court case and appeals.

This included £112,519 on legal expenses for the appeal at the Supreme Court, and the £80,000 they were ordered to pay of Fiona McBride's legal fees.

Scottish Conservative MSP and convenor of the Justice Committee, Margaret Mitchell said:

“This is a staggering amount of money to be spent on one single court case.

“Nearly three quarters of a million pounds of taxpayers' money has been wasted fighting this legal case, and it's simply not good enough.

“Not only did the SPA wrongfully get rid of a competent and professional

employee, they then spent huge amounts as they persisted to fight a losing battle in the courts.

“This was one of the most damning abuses of power in the long line of adverse stories regarding the management of the SPA.

“Public money cannot be allowed to be wasted in such an awful manner ever again.”

The FOI regarding the legal costs can be found here:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SPA-Fiona-McBride.pdf>

[Scottish Conservatives launch pharmacy plan](#)

27 Jul 2018



The Scottish Conservative have today launched their five-point plan for enhancing the capabilities of pharmacies.

At a visit to Dears Pharmacy in Edinburgh, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs spoke about the party’s plans to make pharmacies a key partner in primary health care.

It comes during a GP crisis in Scotland that has seen many general practises become understaffed and overwhelmed by increased demand.

The aim of the plan is to use pharmacies to ease the pressure on GPs by allowing them to become trained prescribers, and to allow them to treat more common ailments.

There is also a proposal to extend the opening times of pharmacies to provide more round the clock care, with the potential for 24-hour pharmacies being explored.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs MSP said:

“Under this SNP Government a crisis has developed in our GP services, and we need to start looking at ways to alleviate the pressure.

“Pharmacies are in an ideal position to help, and that’s why we want to see them become a key partner in primary health care.

“By increasing their capabilities and allowing them to become trained prescribers we can allow pharmacies to treat common ailments more speedily.

“And by exploring the introduction of extended hours for pharmacies, including in 24-hour supermarkets, we can help provide immediate help around the clock.

“This would not only take pressure off our GPs, but also provide better patient care – something that is key to this plan.”

A copy of the plan can be found here:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Pharmacies-Plan.pdf>

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26 Jul 2018



The Scottish Conservatives have today held the first meeting of their disability group, which aims to get more disabled people involved in politics.

The Scottish Conservative Disability Group is chaired by Jeremy Balfour MSP, and was formed as part of the party’s commitment to making politics more accessible.

It follows the Scottish Conservatives support of Inclusion Scotland’s ‘Access to Politics Charter’, which involves supporting disabled people’s participation in every aspect of the party’s activities.

The members of the group include Scottish Conservative politicians from around the country who are disabled and want to see progress in this area.

Scottish Conservative MSP for the Lothians Jeremy Balfour MSP said:

“I am delighted to be able to chair the first meeting of the Scottish Conservative Disability Group.

“Disabled people make up one in five of the population, so it is important that we do all we can to help them get involved in politics.

“For us, that means giving disabled members of the Scottish Conservatives a forum to give their views so we can better support and encourage them to take a more prominent role.

“The group will also be a platform to ensure the views of disabled people are considered when party policy is being developed.

“Over the coming months we look forward to taking more steps to help make politics more accessible.”