

Labour launches NHS Workforce Commission

Scottish Labour has launched the NHS and Social Care Workforce Commission



The Health and Social Care Workforce Commission has been setup after a decade of SNP mismanagement of our NHS, which has seen a chronic shortage of NHS and social care staff across the sector.

During her time as Health Secretary, Nicola Sturgeon cut training places for nurses and midwives, the result of which is still being felt with 2,500 nurse and midwife vacancies in the NHS.

Scottish Labour has already published research this week that found that private agency spend has increased six-fold in the last five years and that up to 20 NHS services are under threat explicitly because of staff shortages. This also followed reports earlier this week on the underfunding of GPs with one-in-three practices reporting a vacancy.

The commission is being chaired by Dr Miles Mack, an independent and politically neutral expert and the chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

The workforce commission will attempt to address the shortage of staff blighting our health service. It will consider how best to decide the appropriate number of training places for health care workers, attract and retain students through enhanced support and examine how to improve plummeting staff morale in the NHS.

Scottish Labour has already committed to lifting the public sector pay cap and the commission will consider ways to clamp down on the spiralling private agency spending in the health service.

Scottish Labour's health spokesperson Anas Sarwar MSP said:

"A decade of SNP mismanagement has left our NHS staff overworked, undervalued, under-resourced and underpaid. We have severe shortages of NHS staff including nurses, midwives, GPs and consultants. This is now starting to impact on services and patient care too with a number of services under threat as we simply don't have the staff to operate them.

"Staff morale is at rock bottom in the health service, with staff reporting there simply aren't enough of them to do the job properly.

"This is part of the legacy left by Nicola Sturgeon who as Health Secretary slashed the number of training places for nurses and midwives. We now have a Health Secretary, Shona Robison, who is out of her depth and out of ideas.

That is why our health service is in desperate need for a meaningful workforce plan.

“Our commission will bring together professionals from across the NHS, representing different sectors, who will together examine the underlying causes for this staffing crisis and importantly develop a strategy and policies to address them.

“I am delighted that we have managed to attract widely respected and experienced individuals who know our NHS so well. They include Dr Miles Mack, who has kindly agreed to chair the commission. As the chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGPs) he brings with him a particular expertise on primary care. He will take up the role while remaining independent of the Labour Party and politically neutral.

“Labour has already led the way in defending our NHS and standing up for NHS staff. We are campaigning across the country to protect local services under threat from the SNP and we brought forward the proposal to scrap the pay cap on NHS staff, which was sadly rejected by the SNP in May.

“With our work on the commission we hope to go further and build a clear and ambitious workforce plan that builds staff morale, makes working in the NHS a more attractive career choice, and helps deliver an NHS and social care system fit for the 21st century.”

Here are more details on our Health and Social Care Workforce Commission:

Commissioners

Dr. Miles Mack – Chair, Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGPs)

Theresa Fyffe – Director, Royal College of Nursing (RCN)

June Andrews OBE – Professor of Dementia Studies

Dave Watson – Scottish Organiser, UNISON

John Marr – Secretary, GMB Scottish Ambulance Service Branch

Kim Hartley Kean – Head of Scotland, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)

Chair of the commission

Dr Miles Mack has agreed to chair our Health and Social Care Workforce Commission. He will bring his knowledge and expertise in particular on primary care to our important work. He will remain politically neutral.

Key areas the commission will be exploring:

- consider how best to decide the appropriate number of training places for health care workers.
- develop a strategy for attracting and retaining NHS and Social Care staff, including considering pay in light of the ongoing pay cap and career pathways
- consider funding models, for example whether direct payments to students will better support healthcare students.
- examine the public sector’s reliance on agency staff.
- analyse the potential impact of demographic changes on future workforce requirements.
- consider what additional frameworks, regulations and legislation could best support the health and social care workforce.

Join the fight for a fairer Scotland in a United Kingdom that works for the many, not the few: <https://scotlandjoin.labour.org.uk/>

WASPI Women face 'double whammy' from the Tories

The Tories have delivered a 'double whammy' to women born in the 1950s by raising the state pension age from 60 to 66 with no transitional arrangements, while telling women to go to job centres they are now closing.

Guy Opperman, the Pensions Minister, asked the women effected by the pensions change to seek out apprenticeships to get older people into work.

Meanwhile, the UK government is closing 70 job centres across the UK, including ten in Scotland.

It is therefore no surprise the Minister was met with cries of 'shame' during a Westminster Hall debate yesterday.

This is callous attack on women nearing retirement age from the Tory government.

The WASPI women have already been treated appallingly by the Tories. Frankly, the comments from the Pensions Minister are nothing short of an insult while the government closes job centres across the country.

And just yesterday we found out the Tories plan to increase the state pension age even further – a policy that wasn't in their manifesto of misery during the election – meaning 34 million people across Britain will have to work longer than under Labour's plan.

Scottish Labour has long supported the WASPI women's campaign and opposes the job centre closures. It's clear that only Labour will protect pensioners as

part of our plan to create a society that works for the many, not the few.

SNP must act to reduce childcare costs – Johnson

A Family and Childcare Trust [survey published today](#) has revealed childcare costs in Scotland are higher than the UK average.

It is deeply concerning that childcare throughout the summer holidays costs almost £300 more in Scotland than it did ten years ago.

Families face enough difficulties with the cost of living, without having to pay over the odds for childcare as well.

Most local authorities in Scotland were unable to even say whether or not they had enough childcare for parents working full time.

In England and Wales, councils have a legal obligation to make sure there is sufficient childcare for working parents – and Scottish Labour wants the SNP to replicate this in Scotland.

A change in the law could bring holiday childcare costs in Scotland in line with the rest of the UK and make a real difference to families.

Tory plans to close Jobcentres must be stopped

Theresa May plans to close Jobcentres across the country is cutting a lifeline for out-of-work Scots.

Shadow Scotland Office Minister Paul Sweeney challenged the Prime Minister in Parliament this afternoon on the proposal to close ten centres across Scotland, including six in Glasgow.

Paul Sweeney said the plans are perverse, given the impact on some of the most deprived areas of the country, with some of the highest rates of unemployment.

Speaking earlier in Scotland Questions, he also called on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to explore the option of consolidating services to

create “one-stop shops” in the same location, incorporating council and community services.

In Glasgow, unemployment has consistently been higher than the national average, child poverty is rising, and the use of foodbanks has increased.

The closures will lead to increased travel times and more expensive journeys, resulting in missed appointments and a potential increase in the number of people being sanctioned. It is therefore imperative the government publishes an equality impact assessment

The DWP should also give urgent consideration to consolidating local services to create 'one-stop shops' in the same location.

It is now absolutely clear that only Labour is committed to helping people across the entire UK to find decent and secure work. We will create an economy that works for the many, not the few.

[Tories must end public sector pay cap](#)

The Tories and SNP have failed to stand up for our public sector workers.

Shadow Scottish Secretary Lesley Laird used the first Scottish Questions since the election today to tell the Tories they are in ‘complete chaos’ on the future of the unfair public sector pay cap.

Chancellor Philip Hammond has reportedly said public sector workers are ‘overpaid’ – a statement which Scottish Secretary David Mundell failed to condemn this afternoon.

The SNP is unfortunately no better than the Tories after Nicola Sturgeon’s MSPs voted against lifting the cap for NHS workers.

Public sector pay restraint has been in place since 2010 and previous research from the independent Scottish Parliament Information Centre shows that the average nurse is £3,400 worse off.

In May, SNP MSPs voted against a Labour motion in the Scottish Parliament to scrap the pay cap for NHS staff, while the SNP’s own submission to the NHS pay review body recommended a 1 per cent overall cost cap this year. But SNP Finance Secretary Derek Mackay has since performed a U-turn following Labour pressure.

Of the total 542,200 people employed in the public sector in Scotland, 89.5 per cent are accounted for by employment in the devolved public sector. The Tory government is responsible for the vast majority of pay rates for workers in the reserved sector.

Labour would choose a different path from the Tories and the SNP.

Scottish Labour has said our dedicated NHS workers deserve a pay rise right now.

We would abolish the public sector pay cap and put an end to the low paid economy for all workers with a £10 minimum wage. Only Labour has a plan to create a country that works for the many, not the few.