

Sick Kids Deserve Better

19 Nov 2019



THE Scottish Conservatives have unveiled a banner today insisting that “Sick Kids Deserve Better” – at the site of the still-empty Royal Children’s Hospital in Edinburgh.

It comes on the 5th anniversary of Nicola Sturgeon’s election as First Minister, with the party using the general election campaign to focus on the SNP’s key failings on the NHS.

As well as the scandal of the empty Sick Kids hospital, the SNP has presided over a crisis in cancer care – as set out in yesterday’s damning cross party report – and created a waiting time guarantee that has never been met.

The Scottish Conservatives are today calling on SNP Ministers to use extra funding proposed by a future UK Conservative government to set out a long-term plan for Scotland’s NHS – rather than rely on “sticking plaster solutions”.

The party is also warning about the consequences of higher income taxes in Scotland which will deter medical staff from coming to Scotland from other parts of the UK.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“Five years ago, Nicola Sturgeon was elected First Minister. Five years on, the Scottish NHS is lurching from crisis to crisis.”

“Nothing symbolizes her government’s failures better than the new Sick Kids Hospital in Edinburgh: over-budget and still not delivered.”

“Meanwhile, higher taxes in Scotland don’t help the NHS – they just deter well qualified medical staff from staying or coming to Scotland.”

“Hundreds of millions of pounds of extra investment for the NHS in Scotland has been guaranteed by a future UK Conservative government. Rather than using this cash to buy yet more sticking plaster, it is time that SNP Ministers came up with a plan that ensures we have the staff to cope with rising demand, and buildings that patients can trust”.

“Two more referendums in 2020 under a Labour – SNP Government alliance will do nothing to solve the mounting problems facing our Scottish NHS.”

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The Scottish Conservatives have welcomed a pledge that military personnel will never be penalised for serving in Scotland.

The Prime Minister has said today that under a majority Conservative Government measures to exempt military personnel from higher income tax rates in Scotland would be made permanent.

The move would save military personnel up to £2,200 per year.

It was welcomed by Douglas Ross, Scottish Conservative candidate in Moray, home to RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks.

He said: "This is great news for the men and women serving in our Armed Forces across Scotland.

"Scottish Conservative MPs campaigned hard on this and succeeded in ensuring military personnel escaped the SNP's high income tax rates for the past two years.

"I'm delighted by this pledge to make that permanent.

He added; "The Scottish Conservatives understand how important the UK's strong military presence is to Scotland and so many of our communities.

"Yet there is growing concern in this election over the future of our military bases under a possible Jeremy Corbyn government propped up by Nicola Sturgeon in exchange for a second independence referendum.

"The Scottish Conservatives are saying no to a second independence referendum – and we are giving a warm welcome to the UK's Armed Forces in Scotland."

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19 Nov 2019



A children's ward at a key central Scotland hospital could be five years away from reopening – despite SNP pledges that it would return to full service back in October.

The paediatric unit at St John's hospital in Livingston – which is meant to be running 24/7 – reduced its hours in the summer of 2017 due to staff shortages.

Since then, the SNP government has repeatedly pledged action, and was meant to get the facility back to full operation in October, only for it to be put on ice again.

Now Scottish Conservative research has revealed it may not fully reopen until 2024.

Freedom of Information documents have shown the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health told NHS Lothian about the lengthy delays back in August, a month before health secretary Jeane Freeman admitted to MSPs the unit would not open on time.

Minutes from a health board meeting state “the commitment for the Paediatric Programme Board is to open the ward 24/7” but NHS Lothian “had been advised by the RCPCH that this would take 3-5 years to achieve”.

Since the downgrade in services, the unit has only opened from Monday-to-Thursday, and thousands of children have been instead forced to travel to the Sick Kids hospital in Edinburgh.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“The SNP is failing sick children and their families right across the country.

“It's bad enough that the flagship paediatric hospital in Edinburgh has been delayed for almost a decade on its watch, but now we learn there are major delays in West Lothian too.

“For more than two years a key children's unit – which has historically

served young patients on a 24/7 basis – has been downgraded.

“Jeane Freeman promised this would be sorted by October, only to admit that wasn’t happening, and now we learn a full reopening could be five years away.

“That’s a complete disgrace. The SNP has been in full charge of health in Scotland since 2007, and only has itself to blame for this mess.

“The nationalists have let down generations of ill youngsters, their families, and the dedicated staff who treat them.”

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11 Nov 2019



The Scottish Conservatives have officially reported Nicola Sturgeon’s government for destroying hand written instructions and using an SNP email account to direct civil servants and conduct government business.

Donald Cameron MSP has today urged the National Records of Scotland to intervene and investigate the First Minister for potentially breaching the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.

The letter argues that the Scottish Government may have broken section 1 of the Act by circumventing their own Records Management Plan, rendering it redundant, and by failing to keep records that should be retained for at least five years.

The Scottish Conservatives have called for the Keeper of the Records to urgently step in to investigate these Scottish Government practices.

Scottish Conservative MSP Donald Cameron said:

“By using a party email account and destroying hand written instructions, Nicola Sturgeon’s government is putting every imaginable hurdle in the way to limit transparency and keep her decisions secret.

“This is an unacceptable and unprecedented attempt to avoid scrutiny and it simply cannot be allowed to continue any longer.

“That’s why I’ve written to the Keeper of the Records today to ask that he investigates this as a matter of urgency.

“Even for this SNP government, with its dubious record on transparency, this is a new low. It cannot be considered business as usual to treat the historical record of government at will, and it raises the very serious question – what does Nicola Sturgeon have to hide?”

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- Seasonal workers to increase to 10,000 thanks to Scottish Conservatives

10 Nov 2019



The Scottish Conservatives have welcomed plans for an increase in the number of seasonal workers to address labour shortages in the UK soft fruit sector.

Angus candidate Kirstene Hair successfully campaigned during the last parliament to secure UK Government action to ensure more workers were made available to farmers.

The seasonal pilot scheme was announced in August 2018 and came into effect in 2019, allowing 2,500 additional non-EU workers to come to the UK from Ukraine, Moldova and Russia.

NFU Scotland said the feedback from its members about the scheme was “very positive”.

Scottish Conservative MPs have been pushing for several months for an expansion of the scheme.

It has been revealed in today’s Sunday Telegraph that the 2,500 will be increased four-fold to 10,000 if the Conservative party forms the next government.

Speaking ahead of a visit to Castleton Fruit in Laurencekirk, Ms Hair said:

“Scottish Conservative MPs stood up for our farming sector during the last parliament and fought for a seasonal workers scheme to address labour shortages.

“Our intervention was welcomed by NFU Scotland, having made it clear at the time it was only a starting point.

“I have always said that the UK Government would have to do more and that this scheme would have to be expanded.

“I very much welcome the planned increase to 10,000 workers to help growers across the country.

“This is further evidence of Scottish Conservatives standing up for our key industries here in Scotland.

“In contrast, Nicola Sturgeon’s separation plans would put up new barriers to farmers trading with the rest of the UK.

“A vote for the Scottish Conservatives at this election will put the division of recent years behind us so we can move on to focus on the things that matter.”