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The Scottish Conservatives are urging the SNP to start tackling the issue of drug-driving in Scotland after falling behind the rest of the UK on this issue.

At a Road Safety Scotland conference, it was announced that since English drug-driving laws came into effect two years ago there had been a four-fold increase in the number of drivers being charged with drug-driving.

Despite the evidence clearly highlighting that the introduction of the legislation saw improvements down south, when asked in yesterday's First Ministers Questions, the SNP continued to swerve questions on why similar provisions are yet to be introduced in Scotland.

The SNP's continued dismissal suggests that it is reluctant to utilise English law, which is impeding Scotland's ability to deal with this serious issue.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Douglas Ross said:

"It's wrong that Scotland is so far behind the curve, compared with the rest of the United Kingdom, on this important issue

"The SNP knows that as a result of the changes in England and Wales, the number of motorists charged with drug driving rose significantly and convictions have improved.

"Those driving under the influence of drugs should not be anywhere near the wheel – they not only put their own safety at risk, but others too.

"The SNP's sheer stubbornness is preventing Scotland from finding a way to deal with drug-driving in the best possible way. "The evidence already exists that changes in England and Wales have had the desired effect and the SNP must act on this now."

Scottish legal news article that clarifies the success of the English success of drug-driving laws and Scottish Government plans:

The Government must urgently explain this ranking and confirm that jobs, livelihoods, and speedy access to new drugs will be at the centre of its Brexit plans – Blomfield

Paul

Blomfield MP, Labour's Shadow Brexit Minister, commenting on the leaked Government report dividing British industries into high, medium and low priority in the Brexit negotiations, said:

"Hard

working people, the back bone of our manufacturing sector, will be the losers in this Tory harsh Brexit.

"Pharmaceuticals

is ranked as 'high priority' yet the Health Secretary has confirmed we will likely pull out of the European Medicines Agency, threatening access to drugs for patients and thousands of jobs.

"Steel

construction is ranked as 'low priority' – a shocking indictment of a Government that claims to understand the importance of manufacturing.

"The

Government must urgently explain this ranking and confirm that jobs, livelihoods, and speedy access to new drugs will be at the centre of its Brexit plans."

Press release: Fishing cheats land big

finer in court in Middlesex

Anglers had penalties of over £450 each imposed at Uxbridge Magistrates Court on 6 February 2017 for fishing illegally, without an Environment Agency rod licence.

Adam Younie 26 of Haverhill, John Tibbs 46 of Romford, and Steve Sullivan 48 were caught fishing without a licence by Environment Agency fisheries enforcement officers at Thorney Weir lakes, West Drayton, Middlesex. Each were fined £300 (with £127 costs and £30 victim surcharge) when an Environment Agency annual licence at the time, cost just £27.

All anglers failed to appear in court. Environment Agency Fisheries Team Leader, Richard Tyner said:

We check licences across all fisheries in Hertfordshire and Essex, and work in partnership with fishery owners and the police to detect and deter fisheries crime. People who don't buy a licence are cheating other anglers and the future of the sport. The Environment Agency relies on the income from rod licence sales to continue the important work we do to protect fish stocks, improve fisheries and encourage more people to take up fishing.

If you are caught fishing without a rod licence you risk a criminal conviction and a fine up to £2,500. There is no excuse. Annual rod licences for trout and coarse fishing remain at £5 for 12 to 16 year olds, £18 for senior and disabled concessions and £27 for non-concessions. Children under 12 can fish for free. Licences are easy to buy from the Post Office website or by phone on 03448 005 386 prior to fishing. Anglers should always ensure they have permission to fish at a fishery and check Environment Agency byelaws.

Last year, Environment Agency officers checked more than 62,000 licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 licence cheats. Between them, they were ordered to pay fines and costs in excess of £600,000. To help crack down on unlicensed fishing, the Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal activity by calling 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Money raised from rod licence sales is reinvested in the environment, including; a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers, protecting stocks from illegal fishing, fish restocking, invasive species eradication, and working with partners to encourage people to take-up fishing for the first time.

Contact

- All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743 (please ask for the duty press officer)

- Email us at: southeastpressooffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk
 - Follow us on Twitter: @EnvAgencySE
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Government needs to urgently look at suggestion of abuse of extra time provision in exams – Rayner

Angela Rayner, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary, commenting on reports that independent school students gain extra time for exams, said:

"Our education system allows children with special educational needs extra time in exams to ensure that they are not unfairly disadvantaged. The suggestion that this could be being abused raises serious questions about the fairness of this arrangement.

"The Government needs to look at this urgently to make sure that no school is abusing the system."

Ends

Hollow words from Jeremy Hunt as the NHS is suffering from the biggest financial squeeze in history – Ashworth

Jonathan Ashworth, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, commenting on reports that Jeremy Hunt said the problems facing some parts of NHS England are 'completely unacceptable', said:

"These are hollow words from the Secretary of State this morning. On his watch the NHS is suffering from the biggest financial squeeze in history and social care is at tipping point. Jeremy Hunt appears to be finally waking up to the scale of the crisis but he must now accept

responsibility. Instead he offers just hand wringing but no solutions.

"This week we have seen more and more statistics revealing that patients are waiting longer, and suffering longer in discomfort.

"Government

advisor Lord Carter has extraordinarily called NHS conditions 'warlike' and now

Sir Robert Francis says there is an 'existential crisis' for the health service

warning that another Mid Staffs is 'inevitable.'

"By

making such stark warnings Sir Robert Francis blows apart Jeremy Hunt's rhetoric on putting patient safety first.

"The

Prime Minister can't just put her head in the sand and ignore these astounding

warnings. This is clearly not just a 'small number of incidents' as she glibly

suggested.

"The Government's mismanagement of the NHS is causing

chaos and misery for patients. We

can't go on like this. They need to listen to the experts and explain fully in the Budget in a few weeks time how they will put the

NHS and social care on sustainable footing. NHS patients and their families should never be put through a winter like this again.

Ends