

SNP must reintroduce childcare expansion commitment

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The Scottish Conservatives are demanding answers from the SNP government over the expansion of childcare provision as Scotland moves into Phase 3 of lockdown and parents get back to work.

Jamie Greene, Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary has written to the Minister for Children and Young People, Maree Todd, and asked when will the SNP government reintroduce the obligation for local authorities to provide 1,140 hours of funded childcare in accordance with their commitment.

In the letter Mr Greene highlights that he has been informed that several local authorities are now unable to honour their previous commitments to provide the expanded, funded hours.

This could lead to a reduction in provision in the private, voluntary and independent sector which in turn could add to the burden of provision on council-provided childcare settings.

Jamie Greene MSP has therefore asked the Minister a series of questions including; when will the SNP government reintroduce the commitment to 1,140 hours of funded childcare, and what financial help will there be for local authorities who have used their budgets to weather the Covid storm.

Mr Greene also asked what progress the Scottish Government has made towards addressing the issues endorsed by a majority vote in the Scottish Parliament, regarding concerns over buildings, staffing, PVI sustainability and living wage loopholes.

Jamie Greene, Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary said;

“After three months of lockdown, it is abundantly clear that without reliable childcare parents simply cannot get back to work.

“The promised expansion of funded childcare to 1140 hours was something that nurseries have already been working towards and parents were depending on.

“The SNP government must now clarify when this commitment will be reintroduced so that nurseries can plan and parents can work.

“In addition, nurseries who have already spent money updating premises and hiring staff must not lose out.

“The SNP government was defeated in the Scottish Parliament – we have not forgotten and we will continue to ensure they resolve the major issues

relating to the expansion of childcare that were demanded.”