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Social Security Scotland has accrued tens of thousands of pounds worth of bills on travel for staff in just six months.

A freedom of information request by the Scottish Conservatives revealed that over £70,000 has been spent in total, with £45,000 going towards rail travel, and the cost of hiring and leasing vehicles hitting nearly £14,000.

It comes after the Scottish Government announced earlier this year that Social Security Scotland would not be administering key social security benefits until 2024.

Scottish Conservative shadow social security secretary, Michelle Ballantyne said:

“This is an extraordinary large amount to spend on travel in such a short period of time.

“Social Security Scotland hasn’t even started administering any benefits yet they are spending tens of thousands of pounds on staff transport.

“With the SNP admitting that they won’t even have the capability to handle social security payments until 2024, you have to question why this amount is so high.

“It’s already embarrassing enough for the SNP that they have had to ask the DWP to continue delivering these powers on their behalf for another five years. “Now the organisation they set up for social security payments is racking up a huge bill despite not having even begun to carry out their main function.”