

Jonathan Ashworth responds to news that three more trusts have been put into financial special measures

Jonathan

Ashworth MP, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, commenting on news that three more trusts have been put into financial special measures by NHS Improvement, said:

"The Government's inept mismanagement of the NHS is pushing hospital finances to the brink. NHS Providers have already warned this week that delivering services within the current financial settlement is "mission impossible". The news today that another three hospital trusts have been forced into financial special measures just illustrates the deepening financial challenge facing the health service.

"Theresa May can't keep on forcing hospitals to choose between balancing the books and providing safe patient care. By underfunding the NHS for so long, the Prime Minister is putting patients at risk. The Government needs to set out a long-term, sustainable financial settlement for the NHS which allows hospitals to provide the top quality health services which Britain's patients expect."

Duke of Edinburgh visits RAF Northolt

His Royal

Highness Prince Phillip, The Duke of Edinburgh made an official visit to RAF Northolt on Friday 17 March.

The Duke made the visit in his capacity of Honorary Air Commodore for the unit, which is home to 33 units from across Defence and wider Government.



As part

of the visit programme The Duke received an update on operations on the unit and met 120 personnel from all three Armed Services and Civil Servants. Corporal Loz Prior, who works on the unit as a Physical Training Instructor was part of the group that met The Duke, he said: 'I felt immensely proud to be part of the occasion. A big part of my role is to ensure that our people are fit to do their job, and His Royal Highness was very interested in the various ways we manage to achieve that. It was a real honour to meet and speak with a member of the Royal family.'



The Duke last visited RAF Northolt in March 2015, when he awarded a new standard to 32 (The Royal) Squadron as part of the unit's centenary celebrations.

Editor: Squadron Leader James Tenniswood

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A former SNP frontbencher has described his party's plans for the currency of a separate Scotland as "not just lamentable, but laughable".

Writing in today's *Herald*, ex justice secretary Kenny MacAskill said that criticism of the nationalists will "turn to scorn" unless they can come up with a proper plan for the finances under independence.

The remarks come as Nicola Sturgeon gears up for the second of a two-day Holyrood debate on whether or not there should be another independence referendum.

But as the First Minister prepares a new break-up bid, she has repeatedly failed to address questions such as which currency an independent Scotland would use and how it would cope with huge debts, deficits and a massive shortfall in North Sea oil revenues.

Mr MacAskill said: *"The fundamental issues that lost the first referendum and undermine the case for a second – the currency and the economy – remain.*

"Failure to address the currency issue is becoming not just lamentable, but laughable. Action needs taken before criticism turns to scorn."

Scottish Conservative shadow economy secretary Dean Lockhart said:

"This is a cutting intervention from someone who, not that long ago, was at the heart of the SNP's separation campaign.

"If even Kenny MacAskill feels the nationalists' currency plans are laughable, you can imagine what the voters think.

"The SNP is rushing into this second campaign, and in the process is making all the same mistakes which lost the vote last time.

"The First Minister has recently changed the SNP's position from flirting with adopting the Euro to possibly using the pound, while other senior SNP ministers want to use a new currency altogether.

"With so much SNP confusion over a fundamental issue, how can voters be asked to make an informed decision in an independence referendum?"

To see the original remarks, visit:

http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15173328.MacAskill__SNP_failure_over_currency_issue_becoming__quot_laughable__quot_/

[The astonishing amounts paid by NHS for locum doctors is another example of woeful workforce planning by](#)

Conservatives – Justin Madders

Justin Madders MP, Labour's Shadow Health Minister, commenting on new figures which show that hospitals have flouted caps on locum pay, said:

"The astonishing amounts paid by the NHS for locum doctors is yet another example of the woeful workforce planning by the Conservative Government. There isn't just a shortage of permanent medical staff, there's now a shortage of available locums to plug the gaps.

"Patients want to know that taxpayers' money is being spent on patient care, not padding out the profits of employment agencies. Jeremy Hunt needs to explain what he's going to do to deliver a long term, sustainable workforce plan for the NHS."

The Road Investment Strategy was insufficiently planned, poorly thought out and unrealistically costed – Pat Glass

Pat Glass MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Minister, responding to the National Audit Office (NAO) report into the Government's Road Investment Strategy, said:

"This report shows that the Government has made a huge error of judgment. The Road Investment Strategy was rushed out by George Osborne and David Cameron as a gimmick for the 2015 election. It was insufficiently planned, poorly thought out and unrealistically costed.

"This has raised expectations with motorists and businesses that Labour warned at the time could not be met and it is clear that the Department for Transport has questions to answer.

"The Government needs to seriously reconsider their plans, so that these crucial infrastructure

projects are delivered on time and in budget.”