

School children in Scotland should have access to counselling

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25 May 2017



Counselling services in Scotland's schools should be on a par with other parts of the UK, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Speaking at First Minister's Questions today, leader Ruth Davidson cited evidence from the Scottish Association for Mental Health that youngsters in Wales and Northern Ireland have guaranteed access to schools-based counselling.

She urged Nicola Sturgeon to offer similar guarantees for pupils north of the border.

The question on the mental health of children came following the Manchester terror attacks, which targeted young people leaving a concert on Monday night.

In a mental health paper published last year, the Scottish Conservatives called for the idea of school champions and counsellors to tackle mental health challenges facing young people.

Ruth called on the Scottish Government to examine the possibilities of this scheme.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"It would not have been right, in my judgement, to use today to indulge in the knockabout of an election campaign.

"But I also believe that we best show our contempt for the tactics of terror by going about our business of practising the very democratic values that the bombers seek to destroy.

"So with the welfare of young people at the forefront of our minds, it's right we find the best ways to support school pupils who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.

"We often talk about money and resources when discussing these issues, but there are other factors too. "SAMH points out children in Wales and Northern Ireland have guaranteed access to schools-based counselling, while those in Scotland could be missing out.

“This is something we have called for in the past, and I urge the Scottish Government to examine this approach too.”

For more on SAMH’s calls for mental health counselling in schools, visit:
https://www.samh.org.uk/documents/SAMH_View_-_Counselling_in_Schools.pdf

To see the Scottish Conservatives’ paper on mental health, visit:
<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Scottish-Conservative-Mental-Health-Policy.pdf>

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23 May 2017



Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson has made a statement to the Scottish Parliament following the Manchester terror attack.

She joined other party leaders at Holyrood in condemning the attack, and paying tribute to the victims, emergency services and people of the city.

The full text of the statement is below:

Presiding Officer, let me first associate myself and my party with every word of the First Minister’s statement.

We extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to all the families of those murdered last night.

Our prayers, too, are with those who, as we speak, are being treated in hospital. Many of them with injuries which are life threatening.

Today the terrible personal cost of last night’s outrage is becoming clear – as the names of those who died begin to emerge.

We know that many of those affected are young – children, teenagers and young people experiencing the thrill of a night out.

A carefree evening. Ripped apart by terror.

Leaving behind parents, family, friends – asking why someone they don't know, and with whom they had no quarrel, decided last night to target their daughter, their grandson, their sister.

We simply cannot imagine their pain today.

Nor can we contemplate how someone could deliberately choose to target innocent children and young people.

It simply feels beyond our comprehension. There are no words.

But as the Prime Minister said earlier today – and as the First Minister has too – we must try to find them.

We must repeat – that we will not be beaten by the twisted ideology of terrorism.

We must repeat – that we will not ourselves descend into hatred or rage.

We will repeat and repeat and repeat that we stand tall. We stand together. We respond to every act of terror that strikes our nation by shouting from the rooftops that our values, our freedoms cannot and will not be diminished.

Values shared by people of all religions in this country, and of none.

The values of tolerance, openness and respect for one another.

Values of common humanity, bravery and generosity.

Which saw hundreds of police, paramedics, doctors and nurses work through the night to respond to a situation they could never have conceived.

Of householders and taxi drivers opening their homes and offering lifts to help those affected.

And let us all in this Parliament extend our solidarity with the people of Manchester.

Who, like the people of Paris, of London, of Brussels, of Nice have responded with courage and decency in the face of cowardice and evil.

Manchester will now be added to the grim roll call of those cities across Europe to have been affected by this terrorism.

And like those other cities, it will first cry, then grieve, and then continue with spirit unbroken – showing that terrorism will never ever win.

First Minister, we are informed today that the terrorist threat level across the UK remains at severe. What further reassurances can you give people that our exceptional police, defence and security personnel are doing all they can to keep us safe?

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23 May 2017



Below are comments from Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson following last night's terrorist attack in Manchester.

"This is devastating news and all my prayers go out today to the families of those who were killed and injured.

"I can only imagine the pain they are feeling and their heartbreak is shared across the country.

"It goes without saying that our political campaigning will cease today.

"Terrorism has once again struck our country and, once again, we are faced with a sense of disbelief that someone could be capable of carrying out such an appalling act.

"We will stand with the people of Manchester.

"We also all know that this wonderful vibrant city will not be defeated by this terrorist act.

"The courageous work of our emergency services and the generosity and help offered by ordinary people after the attack are the values that define us.

"We have faced down terror before, and we will do so again."

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- Nurse smear points to 'something endemic' in the SNP

22 May 2017



Attempts by the SNP to smear a nurse who tackled Nicola Sturgeon during last night's TV leaders' debate reveals "something endemic" within the party.

The audience member criticised the First Minister on the BBC programme last night, saying the Scottish Government had failed to resource nursing sufficiently.

However, instead of heeding the warnings, the SNP's spin operation immediately swung into action, wrongly accusing her of being married to a Conservative councillor.

These false claims were spread by the SNP's candidate for Edinburgh South West, Joanna Cherry, who was later forced into a grovelling apology.

The accusations sparked an onslaught of online abuse towards the nurse from nationalist supporters on social media.

It's not the first time the SNP has rounded on a member of the public voicing legitimate concerns.

Before the independence referendum, party officials tried to smear Clare Lally, the mother of a disabled child, who spoke out against independence.

Scottish Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser said:

"It was a disgraceful episode and Nicola Sturgeon and her party should be thoroughly ashamed.

"This smear operation points to something endemic within the SNP.

"Its supporters talk over critics, not listen. And the nationalists will always try to play the man not the ball. This kind of behaviour is utterly unacceptable.

"Ruth Davidson and the Scottish Conservatives will speak up for anyone at this election who wants to fight back against the SNP.

"People have had enough. We can send them a clear message at this campaign, and make them listen for once."

For more on the SNP smears about the nurse from the TV debate, visit:
<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/snp/nicola-sturgeon/news/86121/snp-mp-apologises-after-smearing-nurse-who>

The episode was similar to when the SNP was forced to apologise to the mother of a disabled child who spoke out against independence:
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2656038/SNP-spin-doctor-forced-apologise-email-mother-disabled-child-trashed-internet-trolls-opposing->

Labour exposed as 'weak and divided' on Scotland's place in the UK

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22 May 2017



Labour's weakness on the union, running from Jeremy Corbyn and Kezia Dugdale downwards, has been exposed in a new dossier.

The party will launch their Scottish manifesto today claiming to oppose a second independence referendum.

However, a number of current General Election candidates have backed separation, while numerous former senior party figures also endorse the SNP's bid to break up Britain.

Now a document produced by the Scottish Conservatives reveals the division at the heart of Labour on the constitution.

It includes quotes from Scottish leader Kezia Dugdale previously saying she might consider voting Yes in future referendums, as well as remarks from UK leader Jeremy Corbyn stating he's "absolutely fine" with another divisive vote.

Deputy leader Alex Rowley – fresh from his weekend threat to ban councillors who go into coalition with the Scottish Conservatives – has also expressed his sympathy for another referendum.

A number of Labour candidates standing next month are backers of the Yes campaign, the dossier shows.

Douglas Beattie, candidate for Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale, campaigned for independence in 2014 and revealed himself to be "gutted" when No won.

In Moray, Labour's candidate Jo Kirby shared numerous articles on social media promoting the SNP.

And Sally Prentice, the candidate for the Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire by-election at Holyrood, openly urged SNP voters to back Labour – as that was

the best way to secure independence.

Labour figures who back a separation vote include ex-leader Henry McLeish and former MP Eric Joyce.

Scottish Conservative candidate for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk, John Lamont, said:

“Kezia Dugdale and Jeremy Corbyn cannot be trusted on the union – the record speaks for itself.

“Labour may pretend that it opposes a second referendum on independence.

“But not only do a series of candidates for next month say the complete opposite, Corbyn himself has said he’s ‘absolutely fine’ with it.

“We know exactly where Labour’s constitutional priorities lie – they want to prop up the SNP in councils across the country, and suspend any councillors who choose instead to work with the Scottish Conservatives.

“This dossier exposes the weakness and division at the heart of Labour on this matter.

“And it proves the only party serious about taking on the SNP and keeping Scotland a key part of the UK are the Scottish Conservatives.”

For more on Labour’s weakness on the union, visit:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2017-04-22-Weak-and-Divided-Scottish-Labour-on-the-union.pdf>