

Mental health crisis in Scotland's ambulance service

21 Dec 2019



Increasing numbers of Scottish Ambulance Service staff are being signed off with anxiety, stress and depression, it has emerged.

Research by the Scottish Conservatives has revealed that hundreds of workers are absent with mental health issues every year.

The incidence is on the rise, with 404 off in 2016/17, 455 the year later, then 520 in 2018/19.

And for the first seven months of 2019/20, there were 379 staff signed off with those issues.

If that trend continues for the whole of this year, 648 will have been signed off, another new record.

Bosses at the organisation are increasingly concerned about the impact of mental health issues on the ambulance service.

In September, they noted at a board meeting: "Absence cases for stress/anxiety/mental health related conditions have increased, resulting in long term absence causes which continue to require significant attention."

The Scottish Conservatives said the SNP government had to do more to ensure ambulance staff had better working conditions and more resources to help those who were struggling.

Paramedics are under increasing pressure, with turnaround times at hospitals increasing and frequent verbal and physical assaults while they're out on emergency calls.

Scottish Conservative mental health spokeswoman Annie Wells said:

"Ambulance staff do a great job looking after us when we need them.

"It's clearly time for that favour to be returned, because it's in no-one's interests for increasing numbers of Scottish Ambulance Service workers to be off with these very serious problems.

"This is where the SNP government has to step in and ensure not only that the organisation has enough resources to make the job bearable, but also to provide support for those who need it.

"These statistics show there is a worsening problem within the ambulance service, and it cannot be allowed to continue.

“It is one of the most important professions around, and we can’t afford for hundreds of those individuals to be suffering in this way.”

[SNP set to miss affordable housing target](#)

19 Dec 2019



The SNP is set to miss its own target of building 50,000 affordable homes by the end of 2021.

A report released today has revealed only 25,000 extra homes have been built so far, despite ministers being three years into the pledge.

And if the current building rates continue, the SNP government will fall thousands of homes short of the commitment.

It’s the latest report to expose the nationalists’ poor performance on housing and housebuilding, an area over which they’ve had sole control since 2007.

Scottish Conservative housing spokesman Graham Simpson said:

“This is another example of the SNP making a warm-worded promise, but failing to deliver for the people who really need these promises to be kept.

“The SNP government’s performance on housing has been atrocious, and it’s the most vulnerable people in society who are losing out.

“This pledge was made several years ago, but clearly there’s no real intention from SNP ministers to see it through.

“This inaction is causing uncertainty for housing associations who don’t really know what they’re medium-term funding is going to be.

“That’s what happens when you have an SNP government completely distracted by selfish, constitutional obsessions.”

Sturgeon still 'bending the rules' with latest indyref2 stunt

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19 Dec 2019



Nicola Sturgeon is still trying to “bend the rules” by forcing through a second referendum on Scottish independence, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The First Minister announced today that she would formally request the powers to hold a divisive re-run at a time of the SNP’s choosing.

She also admitted after the announcement that, even if she were to lose a second referendum, she would then pursue another one after that.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Nicola Sturgeon hasn’t said anything new here, and the fundamentals remain the same.

“Scotland voted No in 2014, and both sides agreed that would be a once-in-a-generation decision come what may.

“Ever since then Nicola Sturgeon has tried to bend the rules, and this latest stunt is another example of that.

“Now, more than ever, Scotland needs a government that cares about public services, jobs and the economy.

“Instead, it’s got an SNP First Minister who’s only serious about breaking up the country.

“Nicola Sturgeon has made it clear again if she doesn’t win indyref2, it’ll be straight onto indyref3 and indyref4.

“She wants to trap Scotland in a neverendum when most people simply want to move on.”

Sturgeon-Corbyn “stitch up” confirmed

8 Dec 2019



The Scottish Conservatives have warned that a SNP-Labour deal only requires “dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s” after Labour shadow minister Paul Sweeny confirmed today that an agreement was on the cards.

Quizzed on Sunday Politics Scotland, Mr Swinney agreed that a arrangement between a minority Labour administration and the SNP after Thursday’s election, involving a second independence referendum, was a “possibility”

Following him, SNP Westminster leader Ian Blackford said he spoke regularly to Jeremy Corbyn and that he expected the Labour leader to support the SNP’s demand for a second referendum next year.

Mr Carlaw also described as “arrogant” Nicola Sturgeon’s suggestion today that she may go on for five more years as First Minister.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Paul Sweeney has set it out in black and white. A Labour – SNP pact is being drawn up; it’s just a matter of dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s. This is what could happen by Friday if Sturgeon and Corbyn succeed.”

“It means our Union is on the line this week. Ian Blackford said today that he and Jeremy Corbyn speak regularly, and he doesn’t expect Corbyn to oppose the Nationalists. So pro-UK voters in Scotland face the very real risk of an Indyref2 pact being stitched up by the end of this week.”

“Pro-UK voters in Scotland must act on Thursday to stop this happening. And it is only by voting Scottish Conservative and Unionist that we can do that.”

He added:

“Nicola Sturgeon now appears to think she can go on and on and on. How utterly arrogant. The Scots I speak to don’t want her in charge of the Scottish Government for five more weeks, never mind five more years.”

“Nicola Sturgeon is planning for more chaos and division come Friday. Instead let’s send her a clear message: say no to Indyref2, and get back to what matters.”

750k Scots can stop Sturgeon again

8 Dec 2019



Pro-UK Scots can stop Nicola Sturgeon's independence referendum by joining together and voting Scottish Conservative on Thursday, Jackson Carlaw says today (Sunday).

Mr Carlaw pointed to the impact achieved by the 750,000 Scots who voted Scottish Conservative in 2017.

Within 3 weeks, the First Minister was forced to put her indyref2 plans on ice.

Mr Carlaw said that these voters, together with new supporters gained over the campaign, could act on Thursday and put the SNP's referendum "in cold storage".

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"Two years ago, three-quarters of a million Scots gave their vote to the Scottish Conservatives to stop the SNP's divisive second independence referendum.

"By acting together, they won. They toppled nationalist MPs off their perch, and forced Nicola Sturgeon to put her indyref2 plans on ice.

"This week, we need those 750,000 people to come together once more and tell her again.

"As more pro-union voters join them in backing the Scottish Conservatives during this campaign, this time we can put that referendum in the cold storage for good.

"Pro-UK voters need to act as one. Jeremy Corbyn won't stop her, only the Scottish Conservatives will do so.

"Three-quarters of a million Scots stopped Sturgeon last time round – they can do so again this week."