

# Adam Tomkins MSP announces he won't seek re-election

17 Jul 2020



Adam Tomkins, Scottish Conservative MSP for the Glasgow region has announced that he will not be seeking re-election at the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary election.

Adam has been a Scottish Conservative MSP for Glasgow since 2016 and will return full-time to his role as the John Millar Professor of Public Law at the University of Glasgow.

## **Adam Tomkins, Scottish Conservative MSP said:**

"Serving as one of our party's elected representatives for Glasgow has been an enormous privilege and leaving the Scottish Parliament in 2021 will be a wrench.

"I am not leaving the Parliament for political reasons. I wish Jackson and his team every success.

"My reasons are personal, to do with the work I want to pursue in the coming years and to do with the kind of father I aspire to be to my four children.

"I know that I will be stepping down in circumstances where the party is so much stronger than it was five years ago.

"Crucially, however, we have a momentous election in only nine months' time. Between now and then we must all work tirelessly to ensure that we return and elect the highest possible number of Conservative candidates, not only in Glasgow, but right across the country."

## **Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative leader said;**

"I would like to thank Adam both for his personal support and advice, and also for the immense contribution he has made to the Scottish Conservative parliamentary group and the party as a whole.

"Adam has been an invaluable source of energy and intellect, compassion and humour.

"While Adam has made important interventions on the union, his work on social deprivation, drug addiction and live music in Glasgow truly demonstrate the breadth of his interests and capability.

"We will all miss him and we wish him well."

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## Almost 20,000 businesses still waiting for help from SNP

16 Jul 2020



Almost a week after the scheme has officially closed, just under 20,000 Scottish businesses are still waiting for financial aid to help them through the Covid crisis, according to the latest official figures published today.

The statistics show that while 105,585 businesses had applied for grants from the Scottish government by the deadline only 86,505 have received this crucial help, leaving 19,080 on the waiting list.

This is an increase of 1,743 from last week when 17,337 firms were still waiting for their applications to be processed.

The Scottish Conservatives have criticised this increasing waiting list and pointed out that Scottish businesses have received less financial help from the SNP government than their counterparts south of the border, making speedy access to this financial aid even more important.

**Donald Cameron Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary said:**

“It’s pretty appalling that most businesses are now reopening and yet almost 20,000 firms are still waiting for financial support from the SNP government.

“These funds are crucial in helping people keep their jobs and ensuring businesses stay afloat, as we try and restart our economy.

“The SNP government has already short-changed Scottish businesses in comparison to their counterparts south of the border.

“That means it’s even more important that Scottish workers and businesses get the help they are entitled to, quickly.

“The SNP government has already badly let down Scottish business, this extra delay may well be the last straw for many.”

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## Vulnerable children must not be left

# behind after Covid

16 Jul 2020



The Scottish Conservatives have raised concerns about vulnerable children being left behind after the Scottish Government published guidance on the reopening of schools.

The publication, Advice from the COVID-19 Advisory Sub-group on Education and children's issues, contains guidance to ensure children and staff can operate safely when schools reopen on the 11th August even though the SNP government will wait until 30<sup>th</sup> July to formally decide if this is possible.

Measures includes no social distancing between pupils but two- metres 'wherever possible' between teachers and pupils.

In addition, the guidelines could be altered and perhaps a variation introduced depending on transmission in the local community.

Most importantly, the guidance acknowledges that learning loss worse will be worse in secondary schools and high poverty backgrounds.

The Scottish Conservatives have called for special attention to be paid to those from deprived backgrounds, school transport and increasing teacher numbers.

**Jamie Greene, Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary said:**

"Prior to the pandemic, the SNP government had completely failed to reduce the attainment gap and it is clear that vulnerable pupils have suffered the most during the crisis.

"Serious thought must now be put into how schools can help these children bridge that widening gap so they are not permanently left behind.

"Programmes focused on deprived children must be given priority, but the SNP government must increase teacher numbers, something they have also totally failed to do.

"School transport also continues to be a hugely problematic area, especially in rural areas.

"With many services still cancelled and local authority funds depleted, John Swinney must put his money where his mouth is and ensure councils can return bus services to pre-pandemic levels.

"With only a few short weeks before school starts, the SNP government is going to have to move quickly to ensure schools have what they need if this promise is going to be delivered."

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# [Jim McColl criticises SNP government's lack of business experience](#)

- [Home](#)
- [Posts](#)
- [All News](#)
- Jim McColl criticises SNP government's lack of business experience

15 Jul 2020



Jim McColl, a member of the Scottish Government's council of economic advisors, has today criticised the lack of business experience in the SNP government.

Speaking on BBC radio this morning Mr McColl said that criticism that Ministers do not have enough understanding of business was 'valid' and "There's not the same background in business in Scottish Government."

Mr McColl raised serious concerns that the economy in Scotland could struggle for up to 10 years and warned the country faces losing half its small and medium sized firms due to covid-19.

**Dean Lockhart, Scottish Conservative shadow business secretary said:**

"Jim McColl is not alone – the SNP government's own Advisory Group on Economic Recovery led by Benny Higgins also concluded that after 14 years in government the SNP does not properly engage with stakeholders in the economy.

"This SNP government's lack of business understanding has been highlighted severely during the Covid crisis.

"The SNP's economic response to the Covid crisis has been roundly criticised as incompetent, weak and slow.

"Throughout this pandemic firms in Scotland have received less financial support than their counterparts elsewhere in the UK.

"This will simply result in even more job losses here in Scotland directly as a result of the SNP's incompetence.

"The SNP must set aside their anti-economy agenda or even more Scottish jobs will be lost."

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# Organiser of racist protest admits taking inspiration from Blackford

- [Home](#)
- [Posts](#)
- [All News](#)
- Organiser of racist protest admits taking inspiration from Blackford

7 Jul 2020



One of the orchestrators of “despicable” stunts on the Scotland-England border has suggested the group took inspiration from SNP Westminster leader Ian Blackford.

Speaking to the *National*, Ian McNeil said of the protest: “For some weeks now the locals up north, including one [SNP](#) leader, have tried to discourage tourists from holidaying here until further notice ... that’s what the demo was all about.”

It has since emerged that Mr McNeil has been cheerily pictured with a number of senior SNP figures, including Nicola Sturgeon and Angus Robertson, as well as at SNP campaign events and conferences.

When challenged yesterday whether or not the protestors were SNP members, the First Minister refused to be drawn on the issue, and wouldn’t say if disciplinary action was being taken.

Mr Blackford was criticised earlier in the lockdown period for endorsing a tweet which used expletives to suggest English people should stay away from Scotland.

## **Scottish Conservative deputy leader Annie Wells said:**

“This proves the point that, by deliberately stoking up divisive rhetoric, SNP leaders encourage the racist fringes of the party.

“One of the orchestrators of this despicable stunt is effectively saying they were inspired by Ian Blackford’s words.

“It’s bad enough that it took 48 hours for Nicola Sturgeon to grudgingly condemn this racist behaviour.

“But the fact these individuals are taking their lead from SNP leadership should be a matter of real shame for the party.”