

NHS agency nurse spending rises six-fold

New figures have revealed NHS spending on agency nurses in Scotland has risen six-fold in just five years.

In 2010/11, health boards spent a total of just under £4million on agency nurses – but that number sky-rocketed to more than £24million by 2016/17.

Yet in the same period, the number of nursing and midwifery posts being unfilled increased from 550 to almost 3,000.

These figures show the price of Nicola Sturgeon's decision to slash training places for nurses when she was Health Secretary and the price of a decade of mismanagement of our NHS by the SNP.

A six-fold increase in spending on agency nurses should be a wake-up call for the SNP.

Nicola Sturgeon's cuts are leaving our NHS staff over-worked, under-resourced and under-pressure.

Nicola Sturgeon needs to get back to the day job of fixing the mess she has made of our NHS.

Our NHS staff and patients in Scotland deserve better.

Labour would do things differently.

We would massively increase the money available to be spent on our health service.

We would end the increasing privitisation of our NHS from the SNP.

Only Labour can create a health service as it was originally intended to be – for the many, not the few.

REVEALED: SNP BROKEN PROMISES ON NHS SERVICES

Scottish Labour can reveal almost 20 hospital services that are under-threat – as a result of decisions taken by the SNP and Nicola Sturgeon.

As a result of choices taken by Nicola Sturgeon to cut training places and a failure to address insufficient numbers of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, Scotland's NHS is facing a workforce crisis of the SNP's making.

A total of 19 services across Scotland have experienced temporary ward closures, are facing downgrade or are threatened with permanent closure due to the SNP's mismanagement. Staff shortages are leaving NHS staff overworked, under-resourced and under-valued.

Despite repeated warnings from health professionals the SNP is failing to take action to address this crisis.

Among the services under threat are the Children's Ward at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Paisley and Inverclyde Hospital, which Nicola Sturgeon promised voters would be kept open.

Labour published the research as its 'For the Many' summer campaign turns its attention to the SNP's failure to protect our health service.

The full list of services under-threat are:

- St John's Hospital Childrens Ward
- Royal Alexandria Childrens Ward
- Royal Hospital for Children – QEUH
- Dr Gray's Maternity Unit
- Yorkhill MIU
- Galloway Community Hospital
- Caithness Maternity Unit
- Mulberry Unit at Stracathro Hospital
- NHS Grampian
- Gilbert Bain Hospital, Shetland
- Wishaw general, Monklands and Hairmyres
- NHS Ayrshire and Arran
- Kirkcaldy Medical Centre
- NHS Tayside
- Perth Royal Infirmary
- Scottish Care Homes
- Vale of Leven Maternity
- Inverclyde Hospital
- Nine intensive care units in neonatal services

[Labour's five-point plan to eradicate working poverty](#)

This week marked 15 years since a Labour government introduced tax credits.

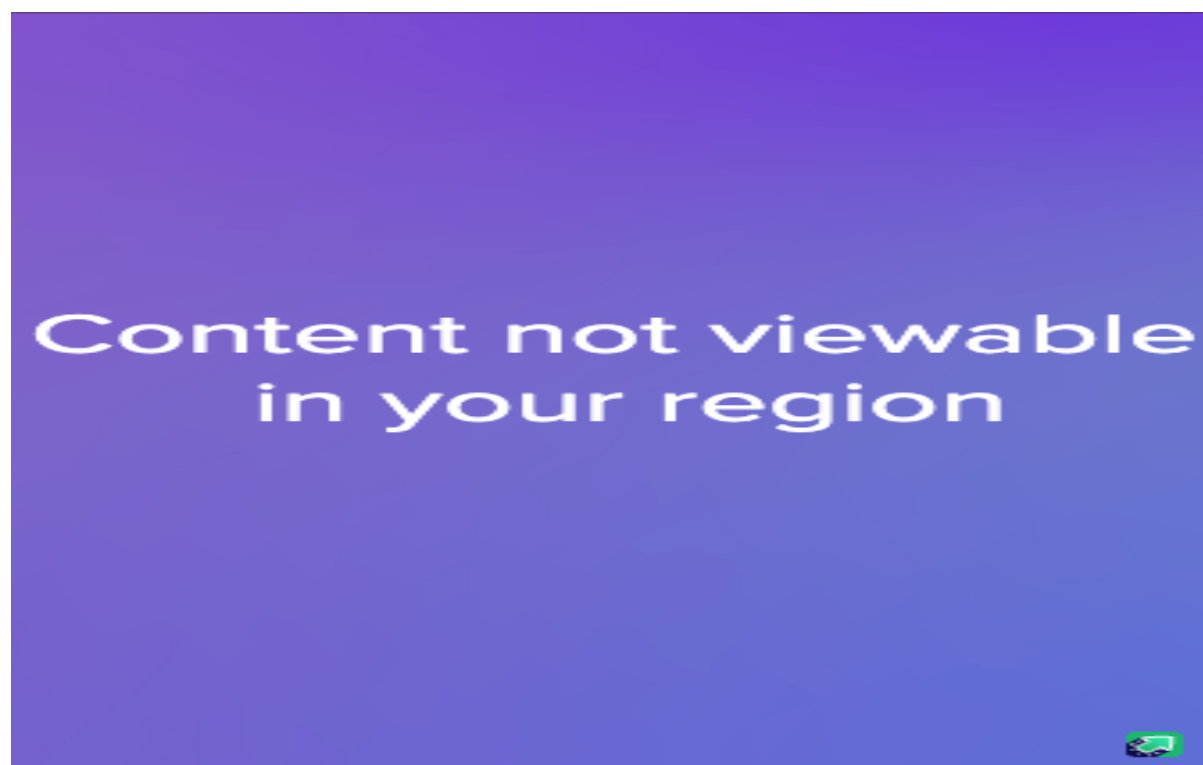
They have lifted millions out of poverty across Britain and they are one of our proudest achievements.

But after nearly a decade of Tory and SNP austerity, there remains much more to do to tackle poverty.

Working poverty in Scotland is at its highest point since devolution, with the number of households increasing by 150,000 since the SNP came to power to 420,000.

The Scottish Parliament was meant to protect working people from Tory cuts, yet the SNP has turned it into a conveyor belt for Tory austerity.

Scottish Labour would do things differently. Today we are launching a five-point plan to eradicate working poverty as part of our fight to create a country that works for the many, not the few.



Increase the minimum wage to £10 per hour

Scotland needs a pay rise.

Employers are getting away with paying low wages, which means there are so many people in working poverty in Britain.

We would end the scandal of low pay in this country by creating a Real Living Wage of £10 per hour by 2020, ensuring everyone gets a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

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Ban zero-hour contracts

In Scotland, there are more people in insecure work than ever under the SNP.

Hundreds of thousands who wake up not knowing if they will be going to work in any given day, and therefore not knowing what will be in their pay packet at the end each month.

A Labour government would abolish zero-hour contracts, giving stability to those workers.

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Scrap the council tax

The SNP promised to scrap the unfair council tax back in 2007. Ten years on, all the Nationalists are proposing is to scrap the council tax freeze.

In 2007, Nicola Sturgeon said: The “hated Council Tax is totally unfair, and any tinkering with bands would not make the system any fairer...”

A decade on from promising to scrap the council tax all the SNP is proposing to do now is to scrap the council tax freeze. That isn't big enough or bold enough. Scottish Labour would abolish the council tax completely, and replace it with a fairer property based system which would see 80 per cent of households pay less.

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Use the powers of the Scottish Parliament to increase the number of people receiving their tax credits

Tax credits have lifted millions out of poverty.

Yet more than 100,000 Scots don't claim what they are entitled to, with £428 million in working tax credit and child tax credit left unclaimed.

Labour will put a legal duty on Scotland's new social security agency to ensure everyone gets what they are entitled to.

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Invest in education to prepare our workforce for the jobs of the future

We have to ensure we invest in education to prepare Scotland for the jobs of the future.

Research previously released by Scottish Labour has shown that Labour's plan to invest in education and deliver a more skilled workforce could mean £2billion more in Scottish GDP and hundreds of millions more in additional tax revenue.

Do you want to help build a Scotland that works for the many, not the few?
Join us here: <https://scotlandjoin.labour.org.uk/>

Paul Sweeney MP: Maiden speech

Mr Speaker, right honorable and honorable Members, I am grateful for this opportunity to deliver my maiden speech, and during a debate on such a tumultuous event in our nation's history.

It is customary for a new Member to make some reference to his predecessors, and reflecting upon the introductory remarks of Richard Buchanan in his 1964 maiden speech, I noted that he declared "If it were within my power to introduce a new tradition to this House, it would be that hon. Members who are making their maiden speeches should do so from the Dispatch Box so that they might lay their trembling hands upon it and give some support to their quaking knees."

On rising from these benches today I can thoroughly attest to my sympathy for those sentiments. The only consolation is I won't have too long to wait for relief, as I will have the first opportunity to address the house from the Dispatch Box next week as Shadow Under Secretary of State for Scotland, and I can only hope that it will provide more ample support for my trembling limbs.

Dick Buchanan was the embodiment of the finest political traditions of my constituency, he was a proud railway worker, socialist and trade unionist. During his tenure as a councillor on the Glasgow Corporation it was not unknown for him to turn up at the City Chambers from the Cowlares railway works in his boiler suit, before changing into the dapper pinstriped suit of the City Treasurer. He also left an eminent legacy to future members of this house as Chairman of the House of Commons Library Committee during its transition from an old-style, gentleman's-club library to the expert modern research facility that is at the disposal of Members of Parliament today; which I am sure has been particularly appreciated by those new members preparing their maiden speeches.

The area of Glasgow that I represent has a remarkable and diverse history, and that is reflected in the diversity and vibrancy of the people who live there today. From its early origins at the northern frontier of the Roman Empire, it has subsequently been vital to Glasgow's development, even though it was only formally incorporated into the city in 1891, when Glasgow's territory was doubled in size. The Molindinar Burn, on the banks of which the founder of Glasgow, St. Mungo, established his cathedral and with it the surrounding town, flows from Hogganfield Loch, the fresh waters of which also nourished what is the longest established business in the city of Glasgow, Tennent's Brewery, founded at the Drygate in the 1550s and whose amber nectar has slaked the thirst of many a Glaswegian over the centuries.

When I attempt to visualise the evolution of my part of Glasgow, Danny Boyle's epic opening ceremony from the London 2012 Olympic Games immediately springs to mind. What was once an area of sylvan beauty and rural charm, a landscape of farms and weaver's cottages, was rapidly swept away as the first harbingers of the industrial age emerged – the first canals and, later the first railways in Scotland would traverse the district. By happy coincidence of its position on the approach to central Glasgow from Edinburgh and the Lanarkshire coalfields, Springburn found itself at the epicentre of this frenetic growth as railway manufacturing and associated industries coalesced there to form the largest centre of locomotive manufacture in the British Empire, at its peak employing 8,000 people and with the capacity to build 600 steam locomotives a year, most which were for export.

Other engineering innovations were pioneered there too, most notably the

first motor car built in Britain, the Johnston Dog-cart, built in 1895 by railway engineer George Johnston in the yard of his father's house at Mosesfield on Balgrayhill. The first road trials took place in the dead of night with Johnston driving the car at twelve miles an hour on a twenty-mile journey across Glasgow. For this apparently reckless behaviour, he was charged with contravening the Locomotive Act by driving his 'horseless carriage' during prohibited hours along Buchanan Street, then as now the main shopping thoroughfare in Glasgow.

Today my constituency maintains this fine automotive engineering pedigree in the form of Allied Vehicles, the largest manufacturer of specialist taxi and mobility vehicles in the UK, employing over 650 highly skilled people in Possilpark. This high value manufacturer is also ingrained in the community, supporting many excellent projects such as Possibilities, which supports disabled people in the local area, as well as the highly successful Glasgow Tigers speedway.

Our engineering prowess was also critical to supporting Britain's war effort during the First World War. Springburn's railway works, gave themselves over to the production of munitions for the duration of the war. Throughout this period, they were responsible for producing military locomotives, aeroplanes, tanks, torpedo tubes, gun carriages, pill-boxes, and munitions such as mines and shells. The works also produced the first modern artificial limbs for wounded servicemen.

The directors of the North British Locomotive Company even offered their headquarters building to the Red Cross, as existing hospitals were insufficient to cope with the war wounded. It opened on Christmas eve 1914. Wounded troops would be transported directly to the hospital on specially converted 'ambulance trains'. By the closing day in May 1919, a total of 8,211 servicemen had been treated.

Nearby Stobhill Hospital, the place where I first entered a more peaceful world some 75 years later, was also requisitioned by the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1914 and over 1,000 patients were cared for there at any given time, until the return of the hospital to civilian use in 1920.

As an Army Reservist, the sacrifice that my city made during the First World War has been impressed upon me every year when I attend the Remembrance Day service in George Square. The stark enormity of the statement on the city's cenotaph, that Glasgow raised over 200,000 troops – a fifth of its population – with 18,000 of that number losing their lives, and a further 35,000 injured never fails to move me with the sheer scale of the carnage that afflicted our people a century ago.

My constituency of Glasgow North-East was created at the 2005 general election from the amalgamation of the Glasgow Springburn and Glasgow Maryhill seats. Both areas have previously enjoyed excellent representation from exemplary parliamentarians. Although my seat was once described as a 'Labour citadel', there was even two Conservative Members in the interwar period, though it was thankfully a brief dalliance. The metaphorical and physically towering legacy of my antecedents was brought into sharp focus when I

recently had the opportunity to venture into the Speakers House and was confronted by a 14-foot-high oil painting of Lord Martin of Springburn and Port Dundas – if there was ever a more effective device to make someone feel simultaneously inspired and inadequate I've yet to find one!

Michael Martin succeeded Dick Buchanan as the MP for Springburn from 1979 to 2009, of course culminating in his election as Speaker of the House of Commons from 2000 onwards. His parliamentary career, spanning seven consecutive general elections, was selflessly committed to the service of others and epitomises the opportunity that the Labour movement has offered to the advancement of working class people over the last century – rising from a Springburn sheet metal worker and shop steward to become the Speaker of this House. I was particularly gratified to meet Lord Martin just last week, and he told me of his delight that his seat was now back in 'safe hands', as he put it.

My first ever experience of party political campaigning was in the Glasgow North East by-election of 2009, after a telephone call from Gordon Brown's wife Sarah, drew me from my exam revision to help William Bain hold the seat for Labour. As someone who was also born and raised in the local area and both of us the first members of our respective families to benefit from a university education, William proved to be a dedicated, industrious and committed champion for our city and its communities during his time in this House, speaking vociferously in opposition to the Coalition government's vicious and self-defeating austerity policies during his tenure as Shadow Scottish Office Minister.

Before I had the opportunity to meet my immediate predecessor, Anne McLaughlin, I had watched her maiden speech with great interest when she delivered it in July 2015. I was particularly impressed by her yearning passion for improving the lives of her constituents and restoring civic pride to our communities; a passion that I share deeply. Anne cited the example of the project to restore the historic Springburn Winter Gardens, the largest glass house in Scotland, as a totemic symbol of our mission to continue regenerating a community that is still contending with the challenge of urban dereliction. As one of the founders of this project, I was personally delighted that Anne made such a generous endorsement of our efforts in her maiden speech. I would also like to thank her for the friendly and good natured election campaign we conducted in June and I look forward to working together in areas of mutual interest in the future.

All the maiden speeches of my predecessors reflect common challenges facing our constituents over the years. Whilst much progress has been made in certain areas, unfortunately many of the issues they identified decades ago remain all too stubbornly apparent today.

Michael Martin referred to the urgent need to strengthen government intervention to develop new industries that would revitalise the local economy and alleviate the unemployment and despair caused by the collapse of locomotive manufacturing. This is still a legacy of decline that my constituency has never fully recovered from. It was something that I felt keenly from an early age, as I learned about Springburn's past industrial

glories from my grandparents.

It is what inspired me to follow my grandfather and father into the Clyde shipbuilding industry, and later Scottish Enterprise, burning with a zeal to rejuvenate the great, Clydebuilt industries that once gave pride and prosperity to our city.

Having recently been involved with the development of Labour's new industrial strategy for Scotland, I am excited about the opportunity we have before us now to unlock a new era of prosperity with the application of coherent, long-term thinking about the development of more high value industries in our country, and I look forward to pursuing that vision with vigorous enthusiasm in this place.

Housing is another recurring matter that is referred to by my predecessors, particularly exploitation by private landlords and the mass clearance of housing in areas like Springburn. Most Glasgow MPs stand in the tradition of John Wheatley and his famous Housing Act of 1924 that provided state subsidies for house building, to build a land fit for heroes. It led directly to the creation of Glasgow's municipal housing system, and saw large scale building of some 57,000 new homes in new districts like Riddrie and Carntyne in my constituency during the inter-war period.

Due to the efforts of my predecessor Michael, and others Glasgow became a pioneer in the modern Housing Association movement, that saved many of the traditional Victorian tenements in areas like Dennistoun and Springburn, and by writing off the city's £1 Billion housing debt, the last Labour government enabled an unprecedented renewal of the city's housing stock, led by organisations like NG Homes, with over £100million invested to improve housing standards in my constituency.

These physical improvements are not just about the sandstone, glass and slate, it's also about reinvigorating the very soul and character of our city; what it means and feels like to be a Glaswegian from one generation to the next.

These efforts have, however, been frustrated by policies from the party opposite that continue to undermine living standards in my constituency. Despite efforts to regenerate our communities, my constituents are still subject to the indignity of benefit sanctions, tax credit cuts and frozen wages. With unemployment and benefit claimant rates in my constituency double the national average and the child poverty level at 36%, the continued onslaught of Tory cuts to their living standards is too much to bear for many. When a constituent approaches me in the street to describe how she was forced to financially support her son and his partner, who was suffering from a terminal brain tumour, for 9 months before his death as he had been found fit to work and had his benefits cut, it is clear to me that we have seen the creation of a new minimum definition of dignity, where anything short of starvation and anything above destitution is now seemingly acceptable, and is apparently blind to any appeal to human compassion.

It was a view that was only galvanised as I watched the benches opposite

cheer with perverse triumph as our effort to remove the public sector pay cap was defeated last month, quite oblivious to the harm this causes to millions of people.

My duty as a Labour Member of Parliament has been crystallised by those observations. The people of Glasgow North East sent me here because they despair at the Tories and yearn for the vision of hope and prosperity that Labour has offered them.

In 1948 this house, having witnessed the disastrous effects of two terrible world wars, was told that the welfare state was established to remove the shame from need and create a society with solidarity at its foundation. Today it is now our solemn responsibility to do everything in our power to defeat this government and restore that abiding principle in our society. That is why the people of Glasgow North East sent me here, and I will do my utmost to repay their faith in me by how I acquit myself in the pursuit of that endeavour in this house.

This speech was delivered on July 13 2017. Please check against delivery.

[Kez Dugdale responds to Brexit Bill](#)

Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale today said Labour will not support the Tories' EU Withdrawal Bill unless there is a 'clear presumption of devolution'.

Ms Dugdale said the Tories are intent on forcing through a Brexit that risks jobs and livelihoods, and the SNP has no interest in the deal that works for the entire UK, meaning only Labour is committed to an alternative to Theresa May's Brexit plans.

Ms Dugdale this week met with Labour's Shadow Secretary for Exiting the European Union, Keir Starmer, in London.

Commenting on the publication of the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, Scottish Labour leader Kezia Dugdale said:

"This Bill may have changed name yet again, but that can't disguise Theresa May's attempt to force a Brexit on the UK that risks jobs and livelihoods.

"Labour believes there should be a jobs-first Brexit; not one that allows the Tories to erode workplace rights, consumer rights or environmental standards.

"Labour will seek a clear and binding commitment to repatriate powers in devolved areas to the Scottish Parliament. We will insist this must be done in a short, but achievable timeframe.

"If there is not a clear presumption of devolution, as well as the other demands set out by Keir Starmer, Labour has been clear that our MPs will not

support this Bill in the Commons.

"It is my firm belief that we must not lose sight of the potential to strengthen the powers of the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh and Northern Irish Assemblies or the regions of England as part of a more federal United Kingdom.

"The Bill must also set out an acceptable financial settlement to accompany the newly devolved powers, as the Tories cannot be allowed to simply inflict further austerity on UK nations and regions.

"The SNP has absolutely no interest in a Brexit deal that works for the entire UK, and it's now fundamentally clear that Labour is the only party committed to an alternative to Theresa May's Brexit that will deliver for the many, not the few."