

Broken promises,
budget cuts &
backwards steps.



THE SNP IN
GOVERNMENT

Broken promises, budget cuts & backwards steps: The SNP in Government

A new report from Scottish Labour

This week, the SNP will hold its tenth annual conference since it formed the Scottish Government. That is nearly a decade in power.

From our NHS to our schools, our railways, and our police services, it is the SNP that is in charge. It's time for Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP to take ownership of a decade of SNP government, which is littered with broken promises, budget cuts, and backwards steps.

- Under the SNP, the attainment gap between children from the richest backgrounds and those from poorer backgrounds has grown.
- Under the SNP, Scotland's health boards are facing a £1 billion cut and local services that the Nationalists promised voters would be safe are now facing the axe.
- Under the SNP, rail passengers who were promised a 'world-leading contract' have faced cancellations, delays and overcrowding.

Between 2010 and 2015 the Tories cut Scotland's block grant by almost 5 per cent. That's an economic policy that damages our public services and increases the inequality in our country.

But the SNP has cut local council funding not by 5 per cent, but by 11 per cent.

Nicola Sturgeon has not just passed on Tory cuts – her government has more than doubled them. The First Minister promised voters she would be an anti-austerity champion. Instead, she has become an administrator for austerity.

And then there was the biggest promise of all: that the 2014 independence referendum result would stand for a 'generation' and was a 'once in a lifetime opportunity'. At the SNP conference this week, you will hear about another attempt to divide our country. But our country is already divided enough; we cannot afford to divide it again. Our economy does not need more uncertainty – it needs a fresh focus on job creation. That is why Scottish Labour will vote against any proposal for another referendum. There have been far too many broken promises from the SNP over the past decade; Nicola Sturgeon should not break her promise on a second independence referendum.

Scottish Labour's manifesto for May's election committed to a 50p top rate of tax for those earning more than £150,000 a year so we can invest extra resources in schools and nurseries. We also pledged to set an income tax rate 1p higher than that set by the Tory UK Government so we can stop the cuts to the local services we all rely on, like education and social care. We will seek to amend the SNP's budget to deliver on these pledges.

Scotland needs a government that has answers for the future. Not one that plays a broken record and claims that independence – an argument of the past – is an answer for the challenges of tomorrow.



The SNP's record: EDUCATION

Under the SNP, the attainment gap between children from the richest backgrounds and those from poorer backgrounds has grown:

More than 6,000 children in Scotland leave primary school unable to read properly. [Source](#)

Pupils from poorer background start Primary 1, fourteen months behind peers from wealthier backgrounds. [Source](#)

According to the OECD, and exam results, the attainment gap has grown again. [Source](#)

The Sutton Trust report (June 2016) showed that people from the poorest backgrounds in Scotland are four times less likely to go to university than those from the wealthiest backgrounds. [Source](#)

Here is why:

- Over 4,000 fewer teachers than when the SNP came to power.
- Primary classes sizes bigger than when the SNP came to power.
- Only one in eight children in P1-to-P3 is being taught in a class size of 18 or lower, despite it being an SNP pledge.
- The number of 3 and 4-year-olds with access to a qualified teacher is dropping, down to 81.6% from 85% in 2014. [Source](#)
- The Improvement Service has highlighted that school spending has dropped across all ages since 2010:

School Spending	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Change	% Change
Cost per primary school pupil	5,214	5,054	4,921	4,801	4,653	-561	-10.8
Cost per secondary school pupil	6,878	6,667	6,656	6,626	6,593	-285	-4.1
Cost per pre-school education place	3,599	3,260	3,217	3,051	3,306	-292	-8.1

The Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, said it would be "very difficult" for the First Minister to achieve her goal of eliminating the educational attainment gap at the same time as reducing local authority budgets by up to £350 million. [Source](#)

Nicola Sturgeon's plans to reduce gap between rich and poor school pupils 'undermined by her party's council cuts'

Exclusive: Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland says it would be difficult to eliminate educational attainment gap while reducing budgets

Chris Green Scotland editor | @cpgreen | Wednesday 17 February 2016 | 10 comments



The SNP won't ask those with the most to pay their fair share to invest in education

Nicola Sturgeon promised education would be the driving and defining priority of her government, but time after time she refuses to back Labour's plan for a 50p top rate of tax for those earning more than £150,000 a year to invest in schools.

The SNP has joined with the Tories, not just once, but four times, to vote against introducing a 50p top rate of tax to invest in education.

1. 17th February 2015. [Source](#)
2. 25th March 2015. [Source](#)
3. 20th May 2015. [Source](#)
4. 22nd September 2015. [Source](#)

Labour has consistently argued for a 50p top rate of tax to invest in education in Scotland, against opposition from the SNP and the Tories. It's right that when our public services are facing cuts, we should ask those people who earn over £150,000 to pay a little more in tax.

The SNP record on colleges is simply shameful – budgets slashed, fewer students, falling attainment, inadequate student support and botched mergers.

In the 2007 manifesto, the SNP said: *"We recognise the key role colleges play in the economy and in their communities and will help them develop this role as part of a revitalised life-long learning agenda."* [Source](#)

By 2016, under the SNP government:

- There are 152,000 fewer students going to college in Scotland. [Source](#)
- Student numbers have decreased by 41% over 8 years.
- Part-time students have decreased by 48% in same time - 53% of that decrease is women, 43% men.
- Most reduction in numbers has come from women and over 25s.

Since 2011, the SNP Government in Edinburgh has cut funding for Scotland's colleges by £53million. [Source](#)

The total proposed allocation for this year represents a reduction of 1.4% (£7.9million) from the 14/15 level. [Source](#)

And staff numbers at Scotland's colleges have fallen by 9.3%. [Source](#)

The SNP promise in 2007 of abolishing student debt has been completely abandoned

The SNP's 2007 manifesto said it was "time to dump the debt". [Source](#)

Smarter

Scotland can be smarter. It's time for more opportunities for young Scots with smaller class sizes and it's time to dump student debt.



Instead, student debt in Scotland has rocketed and is predicted to grow even larger before the end of the decade. Under the SNP Government, student debt has doubled up to the point where it is the Scottish Government's single biggest financial asset. This is despite a manifesto promise to abolish student debt - a promise which the SNP immediately ditched on winning power. The value of student debt in Scotland is now almost £2.7 billion. [Source](#)

Scottish student debt has increased in recent years as financial support has shifted from non-repayable bursaries and grants to loans. Overall student debt levels rose by 14 per cent between 2013 and 2015 and are projected to average around £20,000 by 2019. Scottish students from deprived areas have higher levels of student loan debt than students from less deprived areas. [Source](#)

The SNP cut bursaries and grants for the poorest students in Scotland going into higher education by 35.5%. [Source](#)

Poorest students in Higher Education end up with the most debt. [Source](#)

Scotland lags behind the rest of the UK when it comes to university access for students from poorer families.

Analysis published by Lucy Hunter Blackburn, a former senior civil servant, shows that access to university for the poorest students has stalled under the SNP. [Source](#)

The Sutton Trust report, June 2016, showed that people from the poorest backgrounds in Scotland are four times less likely to go to university than those from the wealthiest backgrounds. [Source](#)

UCAS figures, June 2016, showed that the number of 18-year-olds from poorer backgrounds applying to university had dropped and the number being offered places had dropped even further. [Source](#)

The gap between Scotland and the other parts of the UK in application rates to university-level HE by disadvantaged young people has widened this year. [Source](#)

Funding for higher education has continued to fall under Nicola Sturgeon

Meanwhile, overall funding for universities has reduced in recent years, and will continue to do so through 2016/17.

A briefing produced by the impartial experts at the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) found that revenue funding for higher education institutions is now more than £11 million less in real terms than it was when the SNP came to power in 2007 and has continued to fall since Nicola Sturgeon became First Minister.

This research follows a summer report from Audit Scotland which shows that higher education has faced a 6% cut in real terms since 2010. [Source](#)

The Scottish Government's Scottish Funding Council allocated £1.1 billion to universities in 2014/15, a reduction of six per cent in real terms, since 2010/11. [Source](#)

Overall funding for universities has reduced in recent years, and will continue to do so through 2016/17

35. The SFC allocated £1.1 billion to universities in 2014/15, a reduction of six per cent in real terms, since 2010/11.²² This reflects reduced funding received by the SFC from the Scottish Government. Across the main funding streams, changes in funding have been more variable between 2010/11 and 2014/15:

When she became First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon said education is her 'priority'. But we are still waiting for the SNP's Education Bill.

The SNP's record: HEALTH

SNP's £1billion bombshell for Scotland's NHS

Scotland's health boards are facing a £1billion cuts bombshell under the SNP government. And the mismanagement of the NHS goes all the way back to Nicola Sturgeon's stewardship as Health Secretary between 2007 and 2012.

Analysis from Scottish Labour has revealed that Scotland's health boards face more than £1 billion worth of cuts in the next four years, including:

- £258 million in Glasgow by 2021
- £382 million in Lothian by 2021
- £113 in Lanarkshire by 2018/19
- £105 million in Ayrshire and Arran by 2020
- £103 million in Highland by 2021

The figure across Scotland is likely to be much higher as boards such as Fife, Grampian and Tayside have not announced their 'efficiency savings' for the next four years. [Source](#)



SNP failing on 13 out of 19 NHS targets

The SNP Government in Edinburgh mismanagement of the NHS has left the service failing on 13 out of 19 NHS targets. [Source](#)

A string of missed targets from A&E waiting times, to child and adolescent mental health and cancer diagnostics were recently uncovered.

New analysis from Labour also shows that the Treatment Time Guarantee, a legal right the SNP gave patients that they would wait no longer than 12 weeks from agreeing treatment with the hospital to treatment for inpatient or day case treatment, has never been met.

The SNP's record on meeting the expected standards of care for Scotland's patients is woeful. And their response to failing on 13 of the 19 patient standards – is not to up their game, but rather an attempt to scrap the standards with political cover from the Tories under a 'targets review'.

It is clear that the strong opposition on defending Scotland's NHS will only come from Scottish Labour.

The Scottish Parliament united to vote against the SNP's service closures

The budget cuts the SNP is forcing on Scotland's Health Boards are having a direct impact on patient care and adding to the pressure that hard working and dedicated NHS staff are under.

This year Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board is being forced to cut £69million from its budget, with the result that valued local services at Lightburn Hospital, the Vale of Leven and the Royal Alexandra Hospital are being lost.

Only last month Labour united the Scottish Parliament against cuts to services in our NHS by defeating the SNP government in a vote to deem proposed service closures designated as 'Major Service Changes' and therefore requiring ministerial approval.

Despite the SNP claiming these services were not under threat during the election period, the plans have been swiftly progressed since then. Scottish Labour has led the fight to save our services.



Picture: John Devlin/TSPL

[A full dossier on the proposed cuts and the SNP broken promises to the public can be found here](#)

Over £1billion worth of SNP cuts to General Practice has created a Scottish GP Crisis

The Royal College of General Practitioners estimates that funding for general practice has been cut by over £1billion under the SNP Government. [Source](#)

BMA Scotland estimates that more than a quarter of GP practices struggle to fill vacancies. [Source](#)

Average practice list sizes in Scotland have increased by 10% since 2005. [Source](#)

Between 2011 and 2015 the SNP cut funding for medical students in Scotland. [Source](#)

Scotland's NHS Staff are under more pressure than ever before as Sturgeon's cuts bite

Between 2009 and 2012, when Nicola Sturgeon was Health Secretary, training places for nurses and midwives were cut by a fifth and 2000 nursing jobs were cut. [Source](#)

Only a third of NHS staff believe the workforce is large enough. [Source](#)

A recent Royal College of Nursing Scotland survey reported that *"the pressures of rising demand and worsening finances are being felt by the majority of Scottish nurses."*

The survey also found:

- 9 out of 10 (88.8%) said their workload has got worse
- 62.5% said there is a struggle for hospital beds
- Over three quarters (78.6%) of nurses said that finances have got worse.

[Source](#)

The SNP has cut over 5,000 beds from Scotland's hospitals

NHS Scotland average available staffed beds									
2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16 *
27,735	27,051	26,577	25,751	24,803	24,063	23,536	23,158	22,955	22,284

[Source](#)

Kezia Dugdale: 'Thousands' of beds blocked despite SNP's promises



Bed blocking continues to be an issue at Scottish hospitals. Picture: Greg Macvean

SNP's Health Secretary breaks personal pledge on delayed discharge

In February 2015, Health Secretary Shona Robison pledged to eradicate delayed discharge from our NHS by the end of the year, stating:

"I want over the course of this year to eradicate delayed discharge out of the system and I am absolutely determined to do that." Source: Shona Robison, BBC Radio Scotland's Good Morning Scotland programme, Wednesday 25 February 2015

Instead, 567,853 days were lost to delayed discharge in 2015/16. [Source](#)

There were 1,472 people delayed at the August 2016 census, an increase from 1,396 in the previous month. [Source](#)

[A full dossier on the delayed discharge scandal is available here](#)

Privatisation is rocketing under the SNP

Scotland is facing a nursing crisis with staff over-worked, under-valued and under-resourced.

Analysis from Scottish Labour revealed that spending on private agency nurses has rocketed in recent years - from £3,939,107 in 2011/12 to £23,483,000 in 2015/16.

Between 2011 and 2016, the SNP Government spent almost £60million on private agency nurses. [Source](#)

Audit Scotland has previously warned about increasing the use of agency staff in our NHS saying: *"Agency staff are likely to be more expensive than bank nurses, and also pose a greater potential risk to patient safety and the quality of care"*. [Source](#)

The bill for private operations in our NHS has rocketed to £50million in the last year.

Freedom of information requests from Scottish Labour also unveiled a £24million bill in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and nearly £9 million in Lothian.

Labour said the spiralling private spend shows that our NHS is struggling to keep up with demand under the SNP. [Source](#)

After ten years of the SNP, nothing has changed on public health

The SNP has been in charge of our NHS for nearly ten years, but nothing has changed on public health.

We still face the same challenges in obesity, alcohol and smoking as we did ten years ago with little progress.

We also know that if you come from a poorer background you are more likely to be in poorer health. [Source](#)

The SNP's record: PUBLIC SERVICES

The SNP have doubled down on Tory cuts to our local public services

Between 2010 and 2015 the Tories cut Scotland's block grant by almost **FIVE PER CENT**. That's an economic policy that damages our public services and increases the inequality in our country – an economic policy we should reject.

Scottish DEL budgets since 2010:

REAL TERMS (2015-16 prices)	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	% change between 2010- 11 and 2015-16
Scottish DEL	31,659	30,293	29,939	29,567	29,530	30,141	-4.8%

Source: Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) calculations using Treasury DELs included in Draft Budgets

But Scotland's auditors have found that the SNP has cut local council funding not by 5 per cent, but by **11 PER CENT**.

[Source](#)

The SNP has not just passed on Tory cuts – it has more than doubled them. As a result, local services across Scotland are at breaking point because the SNP has taken Tory cuts from Westminster and then doubled them in Edinburgh.

Nicola Sturgeon has said she wants to make different choices from the Tories her entire political life. She can now choose to double down with even more cuts to care or she can back Labour's plan to use the powers of the Parliament to prevent the cuts.

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

In 2007, Nicola Sturgeon said:

"Labour's hated Council Tax is totally unfair, and any tinkering with bands would not make the system any fairer..."

[Source](#)



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. The SNP should work with Scottish Labour to abolish the council tax completely, and replace it with a fairer property based system which would see 80% of households pay less.

[A full dossier on the SNP's broken promise on council tax is available here](#)

The SNP's record: POLICING

Reform of our police service was one of the major reforms undertaken by the SNP and they botched it. Whilst we supported the creation of Police Scotland, we urged the government to ensure the reform was implemented properly.

Scotland's professional and dedicated frontline police officers have borne the brunt of failures by the Police Scotland leadership and SNP Ministers.

Since the creation of Police Scotland, we've seen:

- Cuts to police support staff numbers, leaving frontline staff under pressure. [Source](#)
- The closure of services. [Source](#)
- A lack of transparency over stop and search and police use of firearms. [Source](#)
- Spying on journalists' sources - a watchdog ruled that Police Scotland broke rules on spying on journalists' sources. [Source](#)
- Major problems at police call centres – a review found a raft of problems with Police Scotland's call handling service. [Source](#)
- Police Officer morale has plummeted – in a survey last year, only 15% of staff felt valued and recognised for the work they do. Scotland's hardworking police officers deserve better. [Source](#)
- Audit Scotland predicts the Police will have an £85m funding black hole by 2018/19, [Source](#).
- SNP decisions to ignore warnings about VAT rules have cost Police Scotland £25m every year since the creation of a single force. [Source](#).

Police Scotland confirms closure of dozens of public counters

🕒 7 February 2014 | [Scotland](#)

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A number of station front desks are to close following a review of services

The SNP's record: TRANSPORT

Commuters are fed up with the SNP's excuses and want their rail services back on track.

The SNP promised that the ScotRail franchise agreement awarded to Dutch firm Abellio in 2014 would be a “world-leading contract to deliver for rail staff and passengers”. [Source](#)

But in the past few months, Scotland's rail passengers have faced cancellations, delays and overcrowding.

Three things you need to know:

1. A third of all routes have services that are late more often than they are on time :

Terminating Location	Percentage of times services are on time	Percentage of times services are late
Arbroath	10.3	89.7
Ardrossan Harbour	10.6	89.4
Glasgow High Street	10.8	89.2
Milngavie	25	75
Wick	25.7	74.3
Carnoustie	27.2	72.8
Ardrossan Town	28.1	71.9
Dalmuir	28.1	71.9
Springburn	30.6	69.4
Largs	36.9	63.1
Balloch	37.4	62.6
Paisley Canal	38.2	61.8
Cumbernauld	41.8	58.2
Markinch	42.3	57.7
Elgin	42.5	57.5
Tweedbank	43.1	56.9
Lenzie	43.4	56.6
Tain	43.6	56.4
Girvan	45.2	54.8
Newton	45.3	54.7
Larkhall	46.3	53.7
Lanark	46.8	53.2
Irvine	47.7	52.3
Motherwell	48.7	51.3
Helensburgh Central	49.2	50.8

2. Since 2011, the cap on regulated rush hour fares has risen faster than earnings:

Year	Average gross weekly earnings for full-time employment in Scotland (% change)	Regulated peak rail fare cap across Scotland, as fixed against RPI (% change)
2011	0.5	5.8
2012	2.4	6
2013	2.6	4.2
2014	-0.3	3.18
2015	1.4	2.5
Total change 2011-2015	6.8	23.6

Source: SPICe using Annual Survey of House and Earnings (ONS) and Regulated rail fares cap, [Railways: Fares statistics. House of commons Library.](#)

3. £1 million a month is going back to Netherlands rather than being invested in Scotland:

THE firm responsible for Scotland's crisis-hit rail network have admitted our trains are run for the benefit of commuters in Holland.

Business documents penned by the parent company of the Dutch firm who operate ScotRail boast the contract is used to make healthy profits on "limited investment".

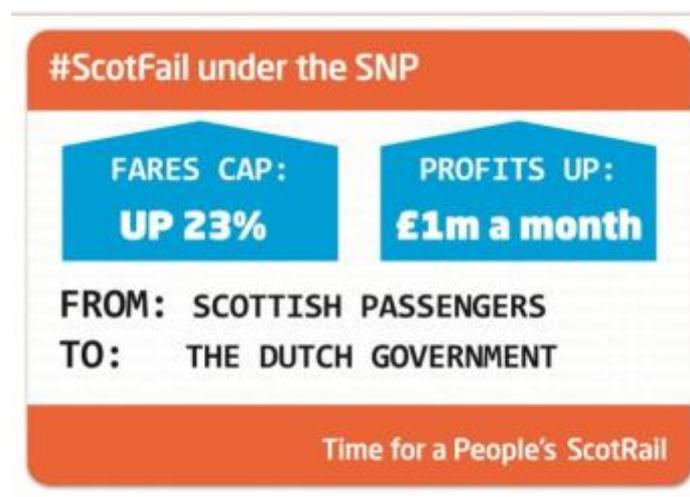
The boss of Utrecht-based Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS), who own ScotRail operators Abellio, says passengers in the Netherlands must benefit from the firm's work overseas.

Accounts filed at Companies House show the Dutch firm are raking in £1million profit a month from the deal.

Daily Record - [Source](#)

Those who travel by train to their work every day are paying more for a shocking service. Scottish commuters are fed up with the SNP's excuses and want their rail services back on track.

Scottish Labour supports a publicly-owned People's ScotRail which will mean a better deal for commuters.



[A full dossier "Scotfail: How the SNP took our trains off track" is available here](#)

Under the SNP, there are delays and spiralling costs on the flagship Edinburgh to Glasgow rail line

The electrification work on Scotland's busiest rail route is months behind schedule and the project is seriously over budget. [Source](#)

Commuters between Edinburgh and Glasgow have already endured a summer of disruption on this line and now it's been confirmed they will face the same this winter. [Source](#)

There are serious questions to be asked about how investment in our rail infrastructure is being delivered in this country.

That's not the only infrastructure project in trouble.

The SNP's landmark crossing over the forth has been delayed. The new £1.35bn road bridge across the Forth will now open in May 2017, six months later than originally planned. [Source](#)



The SNP manifesto, 2016

The SNP's record: A referendum promise

The SNP promised the independence referendum was a “once in a lifetime opportunity”

But now Nicola Sturgeon says independence “transcends the issues of Brexit, of oil, of national wealth and balance sheets”. [Source](#)

The SNP government's [own figures](#) show that Scotland's deficit stood at £15 billion this year, a gap that would mean savage cuts to our public services. Nicola Sturgeon only has one answer to that: nationalism.

The party's leader at Westminster, Angus Robertson, now says that the downsides of independence have to be acknowledged. [Source](#)

And their only member of the Commons Treasury Committee, George Kerevan said that independence would mean five years of cuts, to get the Scottish budget into line. [Source](#)

We do not need the risk and uncertainty of another independence referendum.

Scottish Labour will vote against any proposal for a second independence referendum

