

A DECADE OF DIVISION

A new report from Scottish Labour



A DECADE OF DIVISION – THE SNP’S FAILURE TO GOVERN

The SNP has been in government in Scotland for ten years. In that decade, it has failed to govern.

Its only success has been creating a decade of division.

From trains to police, from schools to councils, it is the SNP that has been in charge – and it is the SNP that has failed Scots across the country.

Under the SNP:

- The gap between the richest and rest in our schools has grown
- Seven out of eight key health targets are not being met, with thousands of patients and hard-working staff betrayed every day
- Our police service faces a funding shortfall of almost £200 million
- Rail passengers who were promised a ‘world-leading contract’ have faced cancellations, delays and overcrowding on a daily basis

This is because the SNP has chosen to pass on Tory cuts to Scotland, rather than use the powers of the Scottish Parliament to make different choices.

Nationalist ministers have cut £1.5 billion from local services since 2011.

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 would make different choices to make Scotland a fairer, more progressive country.

But the SNP government – despite the bluff and bluster – is not interested in fairness or progress.

It is continuing with its decade of division. Nicola Sturgeon has pledged to take forward her plans for a divisive second independence referendum – and it is the Scottish people who will suffer.

A DECADE OF DIVISION: SEPARATION

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

But now Nicola Sturgeon is determined to drag us back to the arguments of the past.

She claims independence “transcends the issues of Brexit, of oil, of national wealth and balance sheets”. [Source](#)

However 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](#)

The SNP’s only member of the Commons Treasury Committee, George Kerevan, said that independence would mean at least five years of cuts, to get the Scottish budget into line. [Source](#)

Its own economics guru Andrew Wilson has even admitted the economic case for independence in 2014 was based on a fantasy and that it could take a decade for a separate Scotland’s economy to recover to pre-independence levels. [Source](#)

The uncomfortable truth for the SNP is that it still – despite a decade of division – has no answer to the fundamental question of what currency an independent Scotland would use. Deputy First Minister John Swinney failed to answer the question six times when asked by the BBC.

It cannot answer whether an independent Scotland would get into the EU – or even if the SNP would actually want it to.

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

Scottish Labour believes that together we’re stronger.

A DECADE OF DIVISION: HEALTH

Nicola Sturgeon has nowhere to hide when it comes to the problems faced by NHS Scotland's staff and patients.

She was:

- Health Secretary from 17 May 2007 – 5 September 2012
- Deputy First Minister from 17 May 2007 – 19 November 2014
- Scotland's First Minister from 20 November 2014

Indeed, it was Nicola Sturgeon who said "a party that is now in its second term of office cannot avoid taking responsibility for its own [failings](#)".

But in 2016 [Audit Scotland published its annual State of the NHS report](#) – the worst since devolution.

It showed only one out eight key performance indicators is being met in the NHS which is in the grip of a workforce crisis and "unprecedented" cuts to health boards.

While Nicola Sturgeon has delivered a decade of division, **the SNP has allowed:**

- More than 90,000 patients to wait longer than four hours at A&E in 2016.
- More than 700 patients died while waiting to leave hospital after SNP promised to eradicate delayed discharge" [Source](#)
- 21 operations to be cancelled every day in 2016 because of capacity issues. [Source](#)
- 400 under-18s waited longer than a year for mental health treatment in 2016.
- More than 1,300 patients waited longer than 62 days for cancer treatment last year. [Source](#)
- Hospital beds cut by 5,000 since the SNP came to power

Scottish Labour has consistently challenged the SNP on its failure to manage our NHS.

Scottish Labour defeated the SNP in Holyrood over its cuts to local NHS services.

That party produced a briefing entitled '[Protect Local NHS Services](#)' ahead of the debate outlining the duplicity and pre-election promises from the SNP regarding the future of these services.

And 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 chair of the British Medical Association in Scotland has warned that our NHS workforce is 'stretched pretty much to breaking point'.

In an interview on the [BBC Sunday Politics Scotland programme](#), Dr Peter Bennie said doctors are 'fed up' with the SNP's spin.

He warned that the health service faces 'system breakdown' without action.

A DECADE OF DIVISION: POLICING

The SNP has overseen a turbulent decade of policing in Scotland. After its shambolic handling of the merger of the national force, the crisis has deepened:

A recent Audit Scotland report found that the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland suffer “weak financial leadership and management” and that the latter will be facing a cumulative funding shortfall of £190m by 2021.

While delivering its decade of division, **the SNP has allowed:**

- Police Scotland to lose thousands of civilian staff. The peak number of support staff employed across all eight legacy forces in [2006/07 was 8,171](#), by [December 2007 it was at 7,621](#). [According to the Police Scotland website](#), it now employs around 5,500 police staff across Scotland but numbers are currently expected to be below that, at around 5,300-5,400.
- The crucial i6 IT project, which would have delivered £200 million of savings for the force, to fail.
- More than 70,000 calls to the police 101 phone number to be abandoned between July 2015 and 2017 – more than 200 a day.
- 60 local police stations to come under threat.

A DECADE OF DIVISION: TRANSPORT

The SNP has failed to deliver for Scotland's commuters.

It awarded the ScotRail franchise to Dutch operator Abellio, in a £6 billion deal.

Ministers promised it would be a "world leading contract to deliver for rail staff and passengers".

They were wrong.

Under the SNP:

- Passengers are fed up with overcrowded, delayed and cancelled trains.
- Passenger satisfaction has slumped to a 14-year low. [Source](#)

Scottish Labour supports a publicly-owned People's ScotRail and a 2017 fares freeze for commuters.

A DECADE OF DIVISION: EDUCATION

Nicola Sturgeon claimed just last year that education was her “top priority” – but her only priority is division.

While the SNP has focused on breaking up the UK, it has allowed the attainment gap between the richest and poorest in our schools to widen.

Just as Nicola Sturgeon announced her plans for a divisive second referendum, a school in John Swinney’s constituency had to appeal to parents to be voluntary maths teachers because of staff shortages.

Since coming to power, **the SNP has presided over:**

- A growing gap between the richest and poorest pupils in maths, science and reading.
- Hundreds of millions of pounds of cuts from education.
- 4,000 fewer teachers.
- 1,000 fewer support staff.
- Bigger class sizes.

The SNP has failed to invest in our education system, continually voting with the Tories to stop the richest in society paying more tax to improve our schools.

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 education.

Instead, **Scotland has seen declining performance across international standards during the SNP’s decade of division:**

- OECD’s PISA scores show that Scotland is declining in reading, maths and science.
- Since the SNP came to power there are almost 150,000 fewer students in colleges across Scotland.
- The Sutton Trust found that people from the poorest backgrounds in Scotland are four times less likely to go to university than those from the wealthiest backgrounds.
- The Sutton Trust also found that the gap between the richest and the poorest pupils in maths and science is more than two and a half years, and performance by even the ablest students is declining.

The SNP has also repeatedly delayed education reforms:

- DELAYED - Consultation on the funding formula for schools

A consultation to decide who funds schools was meant to be launched this month.

John Swinney wants to set the budgets of all schools centrally across Scotland, rather than allow decisions to be made locally by those who work in the local communities.

Delayed until: UNKNOWN

- DELAYED - Governance Review

A consultation to decide to decide who should run Scotland's schools – closed on January 6 and received over 1,000 responses. This consultation, widely criticised as being impenetrable to those outside education, posed a number of questions on local authority and parental involvement in schools.

The responses were overwhelmingly negative, and the clear message is one of condemnation, accusing the government of missing the point and pursuing reforms which are misguided and unwanted.

Delayed until: UNKNOWN

- Delayed – National Testing

The introduction of national testing is one of the SNP's flagship education policies and it is now six months behind schedule due to a delay in pilot schemes. Last month not one of Scotland's councils had started pilots of the new standardised tests in literacy and numeracy.

Delayed until: UNKNOWN

- Delayed - SNP Education Bill

The government has repeatedly said that education is its 'defining mission' and promised that it would publish its Education Bill early in 2017.

Delayed until: LATE IN 2017

A DECADE OF DIVISION: LOCAL SERVICES

The 2017 budget passed by the SNP with support from the Greens means that the SNP will have cut £1.5 billion from valued services including care for the elderly since 2011.

The budget will cut nearly £170 million from local services like schools and care of the elderly this year alone. There's no way round it for the SNP and the Greens - a cut is a cut and these will devastate communities across Scotland.

Teachers will have fewer resources to educate our children, carers will have to shorten visits to our elderly relatives, and the most vulnerable people in need of support will struggle to get it.

The Greens and the SNP have spent years telling us that they are opposed to cuts and back more investment in public services. Yet when push came to shove, the two nationalist parties struck a backroom deal. And let's not pretend this deal was about anything other than two parties desperate to keep the show on the road so they can attempt to impose another independence referendum on the people of Scotland.

The tax con-trick

The SNP and Greens have agreed a deal that freezes the Higher Rate income tax threshold in Scotland at £43,000. As a consequence of that, higher earners in Scotland will not pay a penny more in income tax than they do today.

This raises just £29 million.

The new budget

Rather than use the new powers to ask the richest to pay more tax, the SNP has raided the savings account.

Ministers have dipped into the underspend to find additional revenue – but even that hasn't stopped the cuts.

What this means for schools and care for the elderly

- The Scottish Parliament Information Centre has confirmed that local government still faces almost £170 million worth of cuts.
- This means local government has been cut by £1.5 billion since 2011.

Table 8 Revised - Local Government budget - compared to 2016-17 Budget*

Local Government	2016-17 BUDGET	2017-18 (cash)	Cash change	Cash change %	2017-18 (real)	Real change	Real change %
General Revenue Grant	6,819.4	6,557.8	-261.6	-3.8%	6,463.9	-355.5	-5.2%
<i>Additional Stage 1 Revenue</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>130.0</i>					
Non-Domestic Rates	2,768.5	2,605.8	-162.7	-5.9%	2,568.5	-200.0	-7.2%
Support for Capital	506.5	623.1	116.6	23.0%	614.2	107.7	21.3%
<i>Additional Stage 1 Capital</i>		<i>30.0</i>					
Specific Resource Grants	92.5	211.0	118.5	128.1%	208.0	115.5	124.8%
Specific Capital Grants	126.2	133.4	7.2	5.7%	131.5	5.3	4.2%
Revised Total Level 2	10,313.1	10,291.1	-22.0	-0.2%	10,143.8	-169.3	-1.6%

Source: [Scottish Parliament Information Centre \(SPICe\)](#)

Labour's fairer plan

Labour put forward plans to amend the budget to set the basic and higher income tax rate just 1 penny higher than the rate set by Phillip Hammond, and introduce a 50p top rate of tax for the richest one per cent. This would have raised revenue to stop the cuts to our public services.

The SNP voted against these plans.

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...". [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 per cent of households pay less.

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

A DECADE OF DIVISION: A FRAGILE ECONOMY

On 10 March 2013 John Swinney predicted a second oil boom in an independent Scotland:

"Taken together, this surge in the investment and the rising price of oil mean that the early years of an independent Scotland are timed to coincide with a massive North Sea oil boom."

Source: <http://bit.ly/2n2oM6G>

New analysis by Labour reveals that the SNP's estimates for oil revenue in the first two years of an independent Scotland could have been out by as much as £21 billion.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published updated estimates of North Sea oil and gas revenues which showed that rather than generating funds to spend on public services it actually cost the Treasury money in 2015/16. According to the OBR's estimates, just £1 billion will be raised in 2016/17 and 2017/18. Comparing those estimates with those of the SNP before the independence referendum, there is a difference of around £21 billion.

<u>Oil and gas revenue estimates</u>	OBR (March 2017)	SNP (Independence white paper)
2016/17	£0.1bn	£10.7bn
2017/18	£0.9bn	£11.8bn
Total	£1bn	£22.5bn
Difference	£21.5bn	

Source: [Scottish Government, Oil & Gas Analytical Bulletin \(March 2013\), Table 5](#)
[OBR, Economic and Fiscal Outlook \(March 2017\), Table 4.6](#)

Earlier this month, the Office for Budget Responsibility confirmed that North Sea oil and gas actually cost the Treasury money last year.

The OBR's Economic and Fiscal Outlook for March 2017 confirms that oil and gas revenues were negative in 2015-16. This consists of offshore corporation tax and petroleum revenue tax.

Table 4.6: Current receipts

	£ billion						
	Outturn			Forecast			
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Current receipts	682.3	721.1	744.2	776.4	806.5	834.8	869.5
<i>Memo: UK oil and gas revenues⁵</i>	-0.2	0.1	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.9

¹ Includes PAYE, self assessment, tax on savings income and other minor components.
² National Accounts measure, gross of reduced liability tax credits.
³ Forecast for SDLT is for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
⁴ Consists of landfill tax (excluding Scotland), aggregates levy, betting and gaming duties and customs duties.
⁵ Consists of Scottish LBTT and landfill tax but not the Scottish rate of income tax or aggregates levy.
⁶ Consists of offshore corporation tax and petroleum revenue tax.

Source: [OBR, Economic and Fiscal Outlook \(March 2017\), Table 4.6](#)

Scotland's deficit is more than double that of the UK as a whole

The SNP government's own figures from Government Revenue and Expenditure Scotland (GERS) show that Scotland's deficit stood at £15 billion this year, a gap that would mean savage cuts to our public services under independence.

The official figures also show that Scotland's deficit is more than double that of the UK as a whole, but because we are part of the UK public spending in Scotland doesn't need to be slashed to cut this gap.

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Scotland - Excluding North Sea	-12,351	-16,089	-19,847	-19,844	-18,430	-19,303	-16,981	-16,114	-14,892
Scotland - Including North Sea (geographical share)	-5,526	-4,518	-14,168	-12,379	-8,797	-13,997	-12,982	-14,311	-14,833
UK	-40,883	-103,879	-154,816	-136,898	-115,546	-123,216	-103,933	-91,668	-75,320
Scotland - Excluding North Sea	-10.0%	-12.7%	-15.9%	-15.7%	-14.2%	-14.5%	-12.1%	-11.1%	-10.1%
Scotland - Including North Sea (geographical share)	-3.7%	-3.0%	-9.9%	-8.3%	-5.7%	-9.2%	-8.2%	-9.1%	-9.5%
UK	-2.6%	-6.7%	-10.1%	-8.6%	-7.1%	-7.3%	-5.9%	-5.0%	-4.0%

Source: [Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland \(GERS\), August 2016](#)

Over the last year, Scotland's labour market has weakened.

Employment is down 20,000 over the year. Unemployment is also down but this is down to an increase in people becoming economically inactive, up by 59,000.

Latest data for Oct to Dec 2016

Change on previous 3 months:

- Employment up – 8k
- Unemployment up – 6k
- Inactivity down – 8k

Change on previous year (Oct to Dec 2015):

- Employment down – 20k
- Unemployment down – 27k
- Inactivity up – 59k

Source: [ONS, Regional Labour Market statistics \(March 2017\)](#)

Under the SNP, the number of Scots paid less than the real living wage has increased by 7,000 in the past year.

There are 467,000 employees who earn less than less the Living Wage in Scotland. This has increased by 7,000 over the year.

Source: [Scottish Parliament Information Centre \(SPICe\) briefing](#)

A DECADE OF DIVISION: WILL OF THE PARLIAMENT

Since the last election in May, the SNP has ignored the will of the Scottish Parliament again and again and again

Holyrood voted to ban fracking last year - and the SNP has not responded.

The Scottish Parliament has voted to repeal a controversial Football Act - and the SNP has ignored it.

The Scottish Parliament has spoken on issues that affect Scots every day - the hospitals our children are born in, the ground under our feet and under our homes, and how we tackle intolerance - and the SNP has ignored the will of the Scottish Parliament.