

STEWART MAXWELL MSP - REPRESENTING YOU IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND



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West of Scotland Waiting Lists Soar Under Labour

Shadow Deputy Minister for Health Stewart Maxwell MSP recently highlighted the issue of soaring waiting times throughout the West of Scotland.

Mr Maxwell said, "Wherever you live in the West of Scotland waiting times are getting longer. The three health boards that serve the West of Scotland have seen their waiting times soar since 1999. The Labour party have been claiming that waiting times are going down, but this is patently untrue.

"In Argyll & Clyde since the Labour/Lib Dem government came to power in 1999, the number of people waiting over twelve months for inpatient/day care has risen by over 800%. Between 1999 and the end of 2004 outpatient appointment waiting times have doubled, with the number of patients having to wait more than 12 months rising from 117 to 233.

"Residents served by Ayrshire and Arran Health Board are suffering no better as the increase in patients waiting over 12 months has soared by 500% since 1999

for inpatient/day care. When it comes to outpatient appointment waiting times then the figures are truly shocking. In June 1999 15 people waited more than 12 months for an outpatient appointment, but by the end of 2004 a staggering 288 patients waited more than 12 months. This represents a rise of almost 2000% over the five years since Labour and the Lib Dems took office.

"In the Greater Glasgow Health Board area it is the same story. In June 1999 202 patients waited more than 12 months for their appointment, but by December 2004 the figure had rocketed to 1,966, a rise of almost 1,000%.

"These figures are a disgrace as well as an indictment of the handling of the NHS by the current Labour/Lib Dem government. To make matters worse they continue to deny the reality of the situation and press ahead with reforms that will lead to fewer beds in our hospitals. I will continue to challenge changes to the NHS which will make matters worse for people in the West of Scotland."

CONTACT STEWART

Parliament

By writing to: -
Stewart Maxwell MSP
Scottish Parliament
Room M2.20
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

By phoning: -
0131 348 5669

By faxing: -
0131 348 6479

Constituency

By writing to: -
Stewart Maxwell MSP
14 William Street
Paisley
PA1 2LZ

By phoning: -
0141 887 2185

By faxing: -
0141 887 2183

Email Stewart

Stewart.Maxwell.msp@
scottish.parliament.uk

Maxwell Launches SNP Firearms Petition

On 29th March 2005, Stewart Maxwell MSP launched a petition in Glasgow calling for the Scottish Parliament to take control of firearms and for a new Scottish Firearms Act to ensure Scottish communities are protected from all types of firearms.

The petition stated:

'I recognise that Scotland Needs Power over firearms and agree that legislative powers over all type of firearms should be devolved to the Scottish Parliament immediately and that a new Scottish Firearms Act is needed to create clear laws on who can sell, own and use real

guns, replica weapons and air guns.'

Mr Maxwell said: 'Scotland needs powers over all offensive weapons as it makes no sense that the Scottish Parliament has power over knives and swords, but is powerless to act when it comes to firearms.'

"I am launching this petition in Glasgow because the vast majority of gun crime takes place in the Glasgow and West of Scotland areas and I believe it is essential that the Parliament puts public safety at the top of its agenda."

"A single all encompassing firearms act is required to replace the plethora of existing legislation and regulations. We need a new act of Parliament that clearly states who can own a gun, where it can be purchased and how it can be used. This new legislation must also cover replica weapons and air guns as they present a serious threat to public safety."



Only One Birth A Week At Vale Of Leven

Shadow Deputy Minister for Health Stewart Maxwell MSP voiced his concern at the under use of the Vale of Leven Maternity since the loss of the consultant led services 18 months ago. He said,

"I was disappointed to hear that in the last 18 months there have been only 85 births at the Vale of Leven Maternity Unit, an average of one a week. Yet in the Dumbarton and Vale of Leven area there is an average of two births every

day. Approximately 12% of births in the Dumbarton/Vale of Leven area are now being born locally.

"When Argyll & Clyde Health Board went ahead with the downgrading of the maternity services at the Vale Hospital, against the overwhelming wishes of the local people, they predicted that around 25% of expectant mothers would use the Vale. Yet we now find the real figure is only half that. This is exactly the outcome that oppo-

nents of the downgrading of the maternity services predicted.

"It is simply unacceptable that patients previously served by the Vale now have to travel much further a field to receive the care and attention they deserve and yet they have been left with no option. It is now time for the Argyll & Clyde Health Board to admit they got it badly wrong and be honest with people about what their real plans are for the Vale of Leven Hospital."

Executive Heed Maxwell's Call For Increased Funding

During March Stewart Maxwell MSP joined Cancer Research UK and ASH Scotland to promote No Smoking Day in the Scottish Parliament. He also welcomed the Scottish Executive's announcement of increased funding for smoking cessation services. Mr Maxwell said,

"As part of the process of getting ready for the introduction of the public places smoking ban in early 2006, it is essential that there is widely available support for those smokers who wish to give up.

Therefore I am delighted that the Executive reacted so quickly to my call to them for a significant increase in the funding for smoking cessation services. This extra money is extremely welcome as these services are vital if we wish Scotland to shake off its image as the sick man of Europe.

"I am a great supporter of No Smoking and the vital role that it plays in encouraging people to give up smoking. Smoking cessation services greatly increase the chances of a smoker succeeding

in stopping smoking and I would urge anyone who smokes to contact their GP or phone the Smoke line on 0800 84 84 84 to take advantage of the NHS services on offer to help them quit."

