

FOCUS:

Have the SNP been good for Scotland, and the people of Scotland?

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Brief / Question:

Question title: Have the SNP been good for Scotland, and the people of Scotland?

RESEARCH**Summary**

While the SNP have achieved many things that most people would argue are for the betterment of Scotland, and increase the quality of life for many Scots, they have arguably failed in many key policy areas.

The Scottish economy has been slower to recover from the recession than the UK as a whole, total GDP only returned to its 2007 level in 2014. The high levels of foreign ownership and zero hours contracts also mean that the Scottish economy may not be in a strong position in the long term.

Education has been another area where policies have not been implemented, or where policies have, they have not had a particularly positive impact. Teacher numbers have fallen, literacy levels are failing to improve, and exam results are not improving either. The NHS has also failed to meet many of the targets set under the SNP, and their budget has not grown at the same rate as the NHS in England under the Tory-led coalition.

There appears to be some controversy over the SNP's claims to have reduced crime and violent crime, with large numbers of Scotland's police force questioning these statistics, and swathes of the general public disagreeing with the SNP's softly-softly approach to crime and sentencing.

There have also been instances of the SNP government trying to selectively use statistics to try and show improvement in certain areas when there does not seem to have been any, but this could be said of most governments of any colour.

It is also clear from their policies that the SNP are not nearly as left wing as many people think they are, or as they try to portray themselves. Many of their policies are very central and very similar to some of the policies of Tony Blair's New Labour. Council tax freezes for example, sound good on paper, but in reality they mean that councils now have less money available to use on care for the elderly and disabled. Free university education also sounds good on paper, but does not really help the lowest income families where children are failing to achieve acceptable outcomes in school, and thus are unable to get a place at university. The SNP have also failed to match increases in the NHS England's budget north of the border, despite their claims that Tory austerity will destroy the NHS.

To many it appears that the SNP are far more concerned with gaining independence for Scotland (even though the majority of Scots rejected it in September 2014) at the expense of trying to make Scotland a better place to live, and in being an example for other small countries to follow.

At present, with its poor state of education, increasingly elderly population, high number of zero hours contracts and overseas ownership of businesses, and questionable long-term energy policy, Scotland may have a troubled future ahead unless the SNP turn their focus to these problems.

Below we look more closely at some key areas of SNP policy and discuss their successes and failures as revealed in recent reports and articles.

Successes of the SNP government

According to the SNP some of their many achievements since they have come to power in Scotland include:

- Passing the Children & Young People Act and the Marriage and Civil Partnership Act
- Supporting investment in vital infrastructure projects across Scotland – most recently through the Tax Incremental Finance scheme which will help to unlock a further £1.5bn of investment and has the potential to create around 8,500 jobs.
- Protecting the Small Business Bonus Scheme which benefited more than 90,000 small businesses
- Business rates have been reduced or abolished for some 80,000 small firms and local employers
- 1,000 more police officers, crime is now down to its lowest level for 32 years
- Free Prescriptions
- Free university education
- 25,000 modern apprenticeships have been made available – a two-thirds increase on 2007
- Decreased the size of government, which has saved more than £4 million over the last parliamentary term
- Council Tax freezes
- NHS spending has been protected, an extra £1.2 billion has been given to health boards over the past four years
- Hidden waiting lists have been abolished, hospital waiting lists have been reduced to a record low
- Extra funding has been provided for Scotland's veteran charities
- The building of 24,000 affordable homes, including 3,300 new council houses
- A global leader in green energy projects
- Resisted closing A&E units and other local healthcare centres
- The number of nurses, doctors and dentists working in the NHS have been increased, while the number of senior managers is being reduced by a quarter
- Doubled the international development budget
- Extra funding delivered to secure the future of key museums across Scotland
- There are now 1,000 more cleaners in Scottish hospitals
- Increased payments for free personal and nursing care for the elderly
- Cancer treatment begins within one month of a decision to treat
- Building the £840 million new South Glasgow Hospital
- NHS consultant bonuses have been frozen
- GP practices are now open for longer hours
- No car parking charges at NHS hospitals

- Introduction of the Patient Rights Act
- Over 5,300 people have been helped to buy their first home with the shared equity scheme
- Scotland now has their smallest average primary school class sizes ever, and a new legal limit of 25 pupils for primary one
- 330 schools have been built or refurbished
- School standards have been raised by introducing the new Curriculum for Excellence
- Funding for college bursaries has been increased to a record £89 million
- Continuing to fund the £30-a-week Educational Maintenance Allowance
- 250,000 people have been helped to expand their learning with Individual Learning Accounts to pay for training courses
- Reformed the Children's Hearing System
- Over 2,600 primary children can participate in dedicated Gaelic language classes
- 40,000 new heating systems for low-income Scots
- Expanded free nursery education
- Legal protection to rural schools to prevent closure
- Irresponsible alcohol discounts in supermarkets and off licences have been banned
- Extended free school meals to another 55,000 pupils from low income families
- Protected more than 15,000 Scottish jobs by accelerating spending on nearly £350 million of public projects
- An increase in government efficiency has resulted in an extra £2.3 billion available for jobs and public services
- On track for 31% of Scotland's electricity to come from renewable sources
- Established a £10 million national life sciences institute in Dundee
- Free bus travel for pensioners
- Completed one of the largest rail projects in Scotland for decades
- Improvements to major road networks
- £2.4 billion invested to improve Scotland's water infrastructure
- Reduction in the number of quangos by nearly 25%
- Increased funding for Victim Support Scotland
- Secured £1.6 billion of investment for the rural economy
- Increased promotion of Scottish food and drink
- Increased investment in flood defences
- Invested £2 million in small post offices
- Established the Scottish Investment Fund to help business projects
- Violent crime has been reduced by a fifth since the SNP came to power
- Three-quarters of criminal cases are now completed within six months, compared to two-thirds in 2006/07
- Prison sentences at their longest for a decade
- Increased funding for Victim Support Scotland
- Introduced a scheme dedicated to encouraging new entrants into farming, which is worth £10 million
- Introduced the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill
- Introduced the Crofting Reform Act

Source: SNP - SNP record success three years on

So how do these claims stack up?

Education

The SNP failed to live up to a number of their promises from the 2007 manifesto, one area which they were particularly unsuccessful was education. Since the SNP came to power in Scotland in 2007 education standards have been slipping in many key areas, especially at primary and secondary school level, and the SNP have received a lot of criticism from opposition parties about this.

For example, in their 2007 manifesto the SNP pledged that they would *“match the current [Labour’s] school building programme brick for brick”*. However, the number of schools commissioned is well below the 250 which were promised by Labour’s school building programme, and the SNP have also tried to claim credit for schools opening which had been commissioned and paid for by the previous Labour government.

The SNP also pledged that they would *“Maintain teacher numbers in the face of falling school rolls to cut class sizes”*. This too has not happened, instead teacher numbers have fallen by about 4,000 since 2007, and the number of classroom assistants has also fallen. Teacher numbers in 2007 were 55,100, and in 2014 this had fallen to 50,824. This has resulted in the average class sizes in Scottish schools increasing. The pupil-to-teacher ratio has increased from 13 to 13.6. A pledge that *“Head Teachers will have the power to decide on the most appropriate class sizes in later years”* has also been side-lined, and no such powers have been made available to Head Teachers.

There were pledges to improve curriculum and the quality of teaching such as: *“We will provide leadership and drive to promote the Curriculum for Excellence agenda. We will cut over-assessment and bureaucracy which gets in the way of quality teaching and learning.”* This pledge has also been slow to materialise. Many teachers are unconvinced about the benefits of the changes, and MPs have not been very specific about the new curriculum. This has led to the Head of Educational Research at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) stating that *“Too many [in Scotland] leave school without qualifications or skills that matter in the labour market.”*

The SNP struggled to deliver their pledges on nursery level education too. They had promised to *“increase the provision of free nursery education for 3 and 4 year olds by 50 per cent. That means increasing the entitlement from 400 hours a year to 600 hours a year”*. This 600 hour target was not met by the next election in 2010. The pledge to *“deliver access to a fully qualified nursery teacher for every nursery age child”* was also not delivered. In December 2010 25% of children at nursery were in a “teacher-free zone”.

Source: BBC – 100 Broken SNP Promises, The Sunday Post – SNP Failed Miserably on Education

The SNP have also failed to improve standards across all levels of education, as shown below:

Failures at Primary school level:

One of the key pledges in the Scottish National Party’s 2007 manifesto was to *“reduce class sizes in Primary 1, 2 and 3 to eighteen pupils or less”*.

This pledge was ended in 2010, and by 2014 only 12.9% of pupils were taught in class sizes which met that target. Over one quarter (27%) of Primary 1-3 pupils were taught in classes

of 26 or more, and the average class size for these age groups was well above the target at 23.3. These figures did not meet the most recent SNP target of 20% of classes containing 18 pupils or less.

This failure to meet targets on class sizes has been described as “an embarrassing failure” by Kezia Dugdale, the Labour education spokeswoman.

Spending by the SNP on science at primary level education is also significantly lower than that in England. Only £1.62 was spent per Scottish primary pupil on science in the 2013/14 academic year compared to £2.89 in England – a difference of nearly 44%. A survey of teachers published by the Learned Societies’ Group on Scottish Science Education (LSG) found that 45% of primary school teachers reported having no access to safety equipment or an appropriate area in which to conduct practical science teaching.

The most recent figures released also show that 45% of pupils in their second year can’t “write well”, and over one third of pupils have reading skills that are so poor that they are “not yet working within the level”.

In their 2007 manifesto the SNP also pledged to “guarantee in law the right to a Gaelic medium education at primary level, where reasonable demand exists, and actively pursue the Gaelic teacher strategy”. In 2010 the SNP removed this pledge and stated that it would not be considered in this parliament.

Source: The Spectator, The Daily Record, The Telegraph

Failures at Secondary school level:

More than 80% of the secondary schools in Scotland do not feel confident that they have enough scientific equipment to effectively deliver practical science work to pupils over the next two years. This is according to a teacher survey conducted by the Learned Societies’ Group on Scottish Science Education, who also found that science spending per pupil in Scotland is £7.33 in secondary schools, compared to £10.12 in England.

Source: The Telegraph - SNP's education minister blames No vote for school cuts

There have also been large changes to the way secondary school pupils are examined, Standard Grades (the GCSE equivalent) have been replaced with National 5 certificates. There is also a lower standard called the National 4 certificate, which does not involve sitting any exams, only “continuous assessment” throughout the year. Critics have pointed out that this means pupils will not sit any formal examinations until they are seventeen.

These changes have not helped to improve the number of pupils passing exams, figures for 2013/14 showed that numbers fell by nearly 102,000 in the last year, and the number of pupils achieving Level 3-5 qualifications dropped by 20% between 2012/13 and 2013/14. 75% of S2 (Year 9 in England and Wales) pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds were also found to have much poorer numeracy skills than would be expected at that age. One in four children from poorer families are now leaving school with unacceptable numeracy skills.

Exam pass rates from schools in Scotland's most deprived areas have dropped significantly since 2007. Lochend Community High School in Glasgow's Easterhouse had only 5% of pupils achieve five Standard grades or more at credit level compared to 9% in 2007. Castlebrae High School in Greendykes, Edinburgh saw 0% achieve five Standard grades in 2013, compared to 6% in 2007. In Higher exams only 3.9% of pupils achieved three A grades in the most deprived communities compared to 24.2% in the wealthiest areas.

Opponents of the SNP have said that increases in class sizes and reductions in the number of teachers are some of the key reasons for these poor results.

Source: The Spectator, The Daily Record, The Telegraph

Failures at Higher Education:

In their 2007 manifesto the Scottish National Party promised that they would “*replace the expensive and discredited Student Loans system with means-tested student grants*”, “*Remove the burden of debt repayments owed to the Student Loans company by Scottish domiciled and resident graduates*”, and that they would introduce “*widening access to Higher and Further education in Scotland*”. So far they have failed to meet any of these promises, and statistics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that the percentage of students from state schools in higher education is higher in England than in Scotland, and Scotland also has higher drop-out rates than the rest of the United Kingdom.

The SNP also pledged to improve further education in Scotland, stating in their manifesto that they would “*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*” and they would “*work with employers to help them with the practical support they need to tackle skills shortages*” but so far it has also failed to meet either of these. The Scottish Funding Council announced significant cuts to college funding in 2011-12, and there are still age restrictions on many modern apprenticeships which mean that adults are unable to get grants.

The number of college places in STEM subject areas has fallen by 30,000 since 2007. In 2007/8 there were 86,479 places available in STEM subjects, but this fell to 56,897 in 2013/14, a decrease of 34%. This is part of a more widespread trend which has seen the number of college students fall by over 147,000 in just over a decade.

Source: Scottish Conservatives - SNP cutting vocational and technical education “to the bone”

The SNP have also allowed student loan debt to double in the eight years that they have been in power. This means that students from a low-income background can leave university with debts as high as £27,000, and financial aid through bursaries and grants have also been cut by £40 million in this period. Since 2007 the level of average annual student debt has more than doubled from £2,360 in 2008 to £5,020 in 2014. Between 2009 and 2013 the SNP also reduced the number of EMA payments for college students by nearly £3 million, which meant that 2,365 less students received the awards.

Source: The Daily Record - Nicola Sturgeon rapped over SNP's education record during FMQs with student loan doubling since 2008

The number of places for students from the most deprived areas of Scotland have fallen at Edinburgh, Stirling, Dundee, Aberdeen and Napier Universities. Kezia Dugdale, Scottish Labour's spokeswoman for Education said in March 2014:

"The whole point of the Post-16 education bill was to widen access to university places for young people in deprived areas, in fact the situation has actually worsened. Mike Russell needs to wake up to the fact that under his leadership, the SNP government have the worst record on widening access, the highest drop-out rates and the worst student support for the poorest students in any of the four home nations."

Source: Scottish Labour - Bad day for SNP's record on widening access to education

Economy

The SNP has also received much criticism for its handling of the Scottish economy. In 2013-14 revenue in Scotland was £54 billion, and expenditure was £66 billion. This means that Scotland has a deficit of 8.1% of GDP, whereas the UK overall has a deficit of 5.6% of GDP. This is predicted to be worse in 2014-15 as oil prices have fallen significantly on the previous year. Scottish national debt is over 60%, which is much higher than other small Northern European countries that Scotland wants to model itself on, such as Denmark and Norway.

They have also been accused of making promises in their manifesto which are economically impossible, and attempting to implement them may have disastrous consequences for their economy. One such pledge is the following:

"Seek to enshrine in law key principals of financial management, including elimination of the deficit and balanced "current account" spending by stimulating growth in the economy, as part of a medium term strategy to ensure prudent levels of debt are achieved."

This promise ignores the fact that if businesses, consumers and overseas trade all decide to save at the same time there is little the government can do, other than run a deficit. This is because all sectoral balances must sum to zero.

*Sources: Richard Murphy - The SNP gets its economics wrong, Frances Coppola - Repeat after me: sectoral balances must sum to zero
The Spectator - The latest economic statistics are a disaster for the SNP (not that it matters)*

Another economic problem for Scotland is that only 30% of their economy is owned by Scots. This means that the wealth generated by the remaining 70%, which includes oil, finance and whisky, is being siphoned off to overseas owners, or owners from the rest of the UK. A study in 2014 by Glasgow University found that the level of foreign ownership meant that Scotland's actual income was as much as £2,990 less per head than had been suggested by Alex Salmond. This measurement of national income puts Scotland 20th among the 34 countries in the OECD compared to the 14th place that Alex Salmond had stated at the time.

Up to 120,000 Scottish employees are employed on zero hours contracts, which has contributed significantly to Scotland being one of the lowest paying economies in the OECD.

Source: The New Statesman - On the economy, the SNP is starting to sound Osborne-esque, The Guardian - New doubt cast over Alex Salmond's claims of Scottish wealth

In previous years Alex Salmond himself has also promoted economic policies which have later been exposed as reckless and have led to the financial crisis in 2008. Salmond said in a Times interview on the 7th April 2007 *"We are pledging a light-touch regulation suitable to a Scottish financial sector with its outstanding reputation for probity, as opposed to one like that in the UK, which absorbs huge amounts of management time in 'gold-plated' regulation."*

One of the main reasons for the financial crisis was a lack of regulation in the financial sector. Alex Salmond later blamed Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling for failing to regulate the financial sector properly by stating that *"Gordon Brown and his age of irresponsibility have taken this country to the very brink of recession."*

Source: The Telegraph - Financial crisis: Alex Salmond attacks Gordon Brown over 'age of irresponsibility'

There are other example of SNP inconsistencies with regard to their financial management of the Scottish economy. In recent years the SNP have been very keen to highlight the effect of the UK Tory government's austerity policies and how they have caused suffering in Scotland. Yet they have also claimed that their economy is heading for another boom. Can Scotland really be devastated by Tory austerity and be heading for an economic boom at the same time?

Many Scots clearly do not think that is possible, as a poll conducted in January 2015 showed that 47% of respondents though that the SNP had not told the truth on economics in the referendum campaign.

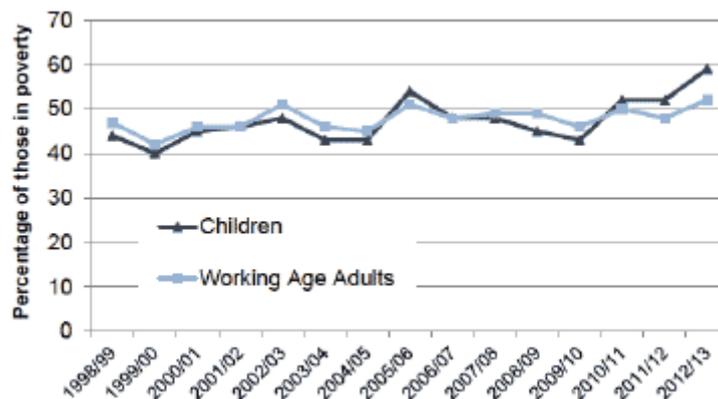
Source: The Evening Times - Poll: 47% of Scots think SNP did not tell the truth on economics in indyref campaign

The SNP have also failed to deliver on a number of their economic policies from their 2007 and 2011 manifestos. Some of the key pledges that they have failed to implement include a reduction in corporation tax, which was promised in both 2007, 2011 and in their 2014 White Paper. This pledge was eventually abandoned in March 2015.

In 2007 and 2011 it was also a policy that the tax system would be fairer, and that families would be wealthier. Local tax changes have not been implemented, and the average annual income in Scotland has not risen at the same rate as inflation. In 2014 the average income was £27,045, but if wages had risen at the same rate as inflation they should be averaging nearly £29,000.

Another pledge was to reduce the levels of income inequality, which is one of the highest in Western Europe. This target has also been missed, in 2012-13 the number of adults in in-work poverty was 250,000, a significant increase on 2006-07, as Figure 1 below shows.

Figure 1 - Percentage of children and working age adults in poverty who are in in-work poverty



Source: The Scottish Government - What do we know about In-Work Poverty?

A pledge was also made in both 2007 and 2011 to improve the productivity and competitiveness of Scotland, including making Scotland one of the top 15 countries in the world for competitiveness. While Scotland has narrowed the gap in productivity between the rest of the UK, productivity relative to the lowest ranked country in the top quartile of OECD countries had worsened in 2012.

Source: Think Scotland - the SNP's broken promises revealed

NHS Scotland

The SNP have also received criticism for their handling of the NHS in Scotland over recent years, and for their attempts to shift the blame onto the UK government, even though the SNP have full devolved control over the Scottish NHS.

In the past year the NHS in Scotland has failed to meet many of its very strict targets on treating patients. They must treat 90% of referred patients within four and a half months, but in the months leading up to December 2014 only 89% of patients were dealt with in the target time period. Five of the fourteen territorial NHS health boards were responsible for this failure, some missing the target by much more than others. These five authorities were Ayrshire and Arran (82.8%), Fife (86.7%), Forth Valley (89.7%), Grampian (84.9%), and NHS Lothian (86.3%).

They have also missed a target for children's mental health services, with 86% being treated within 26 weeks instead of the target 90% and their A&E departments experienced one of their worst performances in 2014 as well. The number of patients being treated within four hours fell from 93.5% December 2013 to 89.9% in December 2014.

Source: The Express - SNP under fire in wake of NHS target failures

Aside from missing some major targets under the SNP, the Scottish NHS has also seen a fall in bed numbers (1,000 beds have been lost since 2012) and nursing staff (partly due to an 11% cut in spending on training), and an increase in the numbers of NHS staff on zero-hours contracts which rose to 8,000. Under the SNP spending on the NHS has also fallen by 1.2% in 2014, while in England it rose by 4.4%.

Source: Morning Star - Is the Scottish NHS doomed?

Considering the difficulty that NHS Scotland has had in meeting its targets for treating patients within the target time period, it might be expected that they would perhaps turn to the private sector for the few patients who cannot be treated. However, despite the fact that less than 0.5% of patients are treated through private hospitals in Scotland, the SNP introduced a policy of reducing this number which would appear not to be in the interests of the individual patients affected who would otherwise have to wait longer for their treatment. This policy has also received criticism from leading Scottish health professionals such as Professor Alan Rodger, who said that Nicola Sturgeon and her successor as health secretary Alex Neil were more interested in hiding bad news and attacking critics than improving the service.

Source: The Spectator - The SNP's blinkered, ideologically-driven, approach to the NHS is typically dismal.

Crime

The SNP has received much criticism for its approach to crime, and the sentencing of criminals from both opposition parties and from the general public.

In 2009 the SNP decided to drop ASBOs for the under-16s, in favour of trying to tackle the causes of bad behaviour, this was despite an increase in youth offending.

Source: The Times - SNP accused of being soft on crime as it ends ASBOs for under-16s

The SNP has been very vocal in publicising the fact that Scotland is experiencing its lowest crime rate for more than 30 years, but the Scottish Police Federation have accused the SNP of hiding the true crime rate by reclassifying offences such as violent crimes to something less serious. At a Scottish Police Federation conference in 2012 a motion was addressed to the then Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill saying that officers do not believe the SNP's claim that Scotland has the lowest crime rate in 32 years, with 323,060 offences recorded in 2010-11.

It also stated that "rank and file operational police officers know that [the drop in the number of offences] is not the case". It appeared that some offences have been "decriminalised", and some more serious recorded crimes had been "subsumed" and grouped in with less serious offences. "The mover of this motion believes that this is a manipulation of figures designed to conceal from the general public the true extent of crime within Scotland."

The Scottish general public also believe that crime levels are higher than reported by the SNP government. A survey in 2011 found that 84% of respondents believed that crime in Scotland had either increased or remained the same in the last two years, and over 50% said that they did not believe that their local areas had adequate police patrols.

A report in 2012 also showed that there was a general feeling amongst the Scottish public that prison conditions should be harsher, along with tougher sentences and tougher community sentences for criminals. This goes directly against the SNP's policies on crime, which include scrapping three-month sentences in favour of community punishments. Some have gone as far as to say that the SNP's policies are "an insult" to all those who suffer as a result of criminal acts.

As punishment, instead of custodial sentences the SNP have favoured financial penalties through fines for more minor offences, but since 2008 over £21.5 million has built up in unpaid fines. This figure does not include another £3.5 million that the courts do not expect to be able to recover.

Source: The Sunday Times - SNP accused of crime rate spin, The Scotsman - SNP 'manipulating' crime figures, police say, Deadline News - SNP "complacent" on violent crime, The Express - Scots voters rebel over SNP's soft-touch justice, The Telegraph - Scottish criminals dodge £25 million of fines.

The SNP have also been accused of destroying data on crime statistics in case they cast Scotland and the SNP in a bad light. In 2011 a Crown Office insider revealed that historical statistics on anti-Catholic crimes has been destroyed before they could be produced at the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee. The reason for this, according to the insider, is that the SNP Government feared that the details of the statistics could damage Scotland's chances of being accepted by the EU.

Source: Scottish Law Reporter - 'Hate Data' destroyed as Salmond's SNP fear Independent Scotland viewed as 'Too Sectarian' to join predominantly Catholic European Union

Energy

The energy policy of the SNP has also received criticism, specifically the 100% renewable energy production target by 2020. This is seen as technically not possible as intermittent renewable energy sources such as wind farms require a conventional back up. A study by Edinburgh University has reported that much of the emissions reductions gained through wind farms would be offset by inefficiencies in the conventional back-up. This therefore makes 100% renewable generation an impossibility to achieve.

This policy also increases the risk of undermining Scottish competitiveness, since it could lead to Scottish industry, jobs and investment being driven out of the country due to increasing business energy costs. It could also lead to many Scottish households being forced into fuel poverty. There have also been studies (one by Verso Economics in 2011) which have shown that each "green" job created through renewable energy installations actually costs 3.7 "real" jobs in Scotland as high energy prices stunt growth and investment. Many of the "green" jobs that have been created are overseas jobs, as wind turbines and solar panels are not made in the UK.

Source: Roger Helmer - SNP Energy Policy.....a Crime against the Scottish People, BBC News - Study says green sector costs more jobs than it creates

The SNP have also suggested removing the locational charging regime for energy supply in favour of a "socialised" system. The National Grid have calculated that this would increase consumer bills by billions of pounds, and this would be felt most prominently in North Scotland. This means that SNP policy would actively increase the number of household in Scotland who were in fuel poverty.

Source: Think Scotland - How the SNP's green policies sealed Longannet's fate

In 2014 the SNP missed their climate change targets for the third year in a row. Despite spending £1 million per day on subsidies for wind farms, greenhouse gas emissions

increased by 0.8% in 2012. This led to missing the 2012 target for reducing carbon dioxide emissions to of 53.226 million tons, with emissions remaining at 55.665 million tons.

The Express - SNP wasting £1million a day on green 'crusade' as climate change targets are missed again

Finally -

Clearly, despite the issues and problems described above, there have been a number of SNP policy achievements and successes (see their own list provided) with the result that large numbers of the Scottish electorate feel that the SNP have made a positive contribution during their years in power and the party continues to be their choice for government in Scotland. A 2011 Yougov poll found that 57% of Scots were happy with the performance of the SNP government, while only 17% were disappointed. 50% of respondents also said that they thought the SNP were the best party to defend Scottish interests in Westminster. Although this majority support did not result in success in the September 2014 independence referendum, in the May 2015 general election the SNP achieved a resounding electoral success, winning 56 out of 59 seats and achieving a 50% share of the votes cast. It will be interesting to see how this recent definitive show of support from the Scottish electorate is translated into policy success and achievements for the SNP, as there will certainly be high expectations from the electorate. How well these are being met and how well the many issues facing the Scottish Government identified in this report are being dealt with will undoubtedly play an important factor in the result of the upcoming Scottish Parliament elections scheduled for Thursday 5th May 2016.

*Sources: Newsnet - Majority of Scots happy with SNP government
BBC Online News. Election 2015: SNP wins 56 of 59 seats in Scots landslide. 8 May 2015*

Important:

We have used our best endeavour and knowledge to research the answers to questions posed. We cannot guarantee that the information provided is absolute in its accuracy or completeness.