

50 FAILURES OF HUMZA YOUSAF

ONE YEAR OF CHAOS AND INCOMPETENCE

After a year in post it is clear to see that Humza Yousaf is a weak leader, who is out of his depth and leading a chaotic and divided government that is not delivering for Scotland.

Every sector of our public services is now weaker thanks to Humza Yousaf's SNP.

Not only is it clear to the people of Scotland that Humza Yousaf has no vision for the future – even his own former cabinet colleagues are saying so in public.

This is a record of shame and failure.

With Humza Yousaf scrambling for a new election strategy on a weekly basis, it is no surprise that the people of Scotland are now looking for change.

We need change here in Scotland and across the UK and only Scottish Labour can deliver it.

Anas Sarwar
Scottish Labour Leader

POLITICAL FAILURES

1. Lost the by-election in Rutherglen and Hamilton West with a 20.4 point swing to Labour and lost every single one of the nine Council by-elections that have taken place.
2. Accused of misleading Parliament over his pledge that WhatsApps and informal messaging during the Covid pandemic were not destroyed and would be given to the inquiry, as well as being forced to correct the record three other times over inaccurate information given to Parliament.
3. Has been forced to u-turn due to political pressure on key policies such as the windfall tax, Council Tax increases, HPMAs, and the National Care Service and lost control of his party, facing rebellions in Holyrood during votes on HPMAs, short-term lets, and even a Vote of No Confidence in Green Minister Lorna Slater.
4. Had 3 defections in a year from MP and MSP groups – Angus MacNeil going independent, Lisa Cameron going to the Tories and Ash Reagan going to Alba.
5. Saw the party descend into chaos amid Police investigations.
6. Failed to sack Michael Matheson as Health Secretary and remained silent while he lied to the public.
7. Nine SNP MPs are standing down at the next General Election – more than a fifth of the group. This includes Deputy Leader of the group Mhairi Black and former Westminster leader Ian Blackford.
8. Repeated u-turns on General Election strategy and messaging, including repeated attempts to move the goalposts of a de facto referendum and a high profile row with Pete Wishart over language.

ECONOMY AND FINANCE

9. Yousaf's talks of "economic growth with a purpose" were at the heart of a wellbeing economy but EY recently described the latest data as showing the Scottish economy to be "weak... struggling to gain any traction".¹
10. The Scottish Productivity Index 2024 from CBI and the Fraser of Allander shows that Scotland is lagging behind the rest of the UK on 10 out of 13 productivity indicators, including business investment and business R&D spend.²
11. In February 2024 Audit Scotland concluded that "The Scottish Government's 10-year economic strategy currently lacks collective political leadership and clear targets."³
12. Despite warm words on economic growth the SNP has cut government investment - in the 2024/25 budget, the Enterprise, Trade and Investment budget was cut by more than £60m and the Scottish National Investment Bank received cuts of £70m.⁴
13. At least a quarter of businesses are reporting skills shortages⁵ and a lack of qualified candidates for roles but the SNP have failed to act on the recommendations from the Wither's skills review.
14. Yousaf promises on New Deal for Business were revealed as empty following the 2024/25 budget, which Hospitality UK said showed that "the Scottish Government has decided to abandon its self-proclaimed reset with business," and the Scottish Retail Consortium said was "firmly at odds with the New Deal for Business".⁶
15. Yousaf also agreed to a new relationship with local government, but mere months after signing the new Verity House Agreement, Yousaf announced plans for an unfunded council tax freeze with no consultation with COSLA or council leaders. Following the budget, COSLA concluded that the funding provided was insufficient, resulting in threats from the SNP government to withhold funding if their policy was not implemented.⁷

¹ https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/en_uk/news/2024/02/ey-item-club-scottish-winter-forecast-2024.pdf?download

² <https://www.strath.ac.uk/whysthathclyde/news/2024/latestproductivityindexshowsscotlandlaggingbehindtherestoftheuk/>

³ <https://audit.scot/publications/national-strategy-for-economic-transformation>

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-budget-2024-25/>

⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/bics-weighted-scotland-estimates-data-to-wave-102/>

⁶ <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/24150265.humza-yousaf-new-deal-scottish-business-ropes/>

⁷ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/23/scotland-local-authorities-hit-out-snp-council-tax-freeze/>

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

16. Almost 825,000 Scots are on NHS waiting lists for tests and treatment – up 7.3% compared to the 770,000 a year ago.⁸
17. As Health Secretary, Yousaf promised to end long waits but not one of his new targets has been met and 83,000 people on waiting lists have already waited over a year.⁹
18. The SNP's flagship commitment to build a network of National Treatment Centres lies in tatters with projects paused in Ayrshire & Arran, Grampian, Lanarkshire, Lothian and Tayside¹⁰
19. In 2023, over 7,300 patients waited more than a full 24 hours in A&E departments.¹¹
20. Despite increased funding and staff, NHS capacity has still not recovered post Covid-19, with 55,000 fewer elective operations carried in the last 12 months compared with the same point pre-pandemic.¹²
21. Over 28,000 Scots are on a waiting list for specialist mental health support. More shockingly, one in four children and young people referred for CAMHS treatment were turned away in 2023.¹³
22. Instead of reducing drug deaths, 1,197 people died in 2023 due to suspected drug use– a tragic 10% increase on the previous year.¹⁴
23. The SNP's National Care Service Bill remains deeply flawed and criticised by key stakeholders while over 10,000 people in Scotland wait for social care assessments and support.¹⁵

⁸ [Stage of treatment waiting times - Inpatients, day cases and new outpatients quarter ending 31 December 2023 - NHS waiting times - stage of treatment - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

⁹ [New national targets to tackle long waits for planned care - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

¹⁰ [National Treatment Centres on pause \(healthandcare.scot\); All new NHS building projects in Scotland put on hold - BBC News; NHS Scotland buildings projects paused as budgets squeezed | The Herald \(heraldscotland.com\); All new NHS building plans in Scotland put on hold for two years | STV News](#)

¹¹ [More than 7,300 waited over 24 hours at A&E in 2023, figures show | STV News; Scots patient forced to wait FIVE days in A&E as NHS crisis deepens - Daily Record](#)

¹² [Cancelled planned operations - Month ending 31 December 2023 - Cancelled planned operations - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

¹³ [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\) waiting times - Quarter ending December 2023 - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services \(CAMHS\) waiting times - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

¹⁴ [Suspected drug deaths in Scotland: October to December 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

¹⁵ [People requiring a social care assessment and care at home services 27 February 2024 - People requiring a social care assessment and care at home services - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

24. During his leadership campaign Yousaf promised to roll out free childcare for all 1 and 2 year olds, but one year on there has only been a pilot in six council areas. Research suggest that two thirds of parents are leaving their jobs or reducing their hours because of the cost and availability of childcare.¹⁶
25. Recent surveys by teaching unions have found that violence and aggression is prevalent in Scottish schools, with 82.7% of EIS branches reporting weekly incidents of violence and aggression and 39% of NASUWT teachers saying they had experienced violence or physical abuse from pupils.
26. School attendance statistics show that attendance has fallen to its lowest level of 90.2%, with almost a third of pupils now persistently absent, rising to over 50% of secondary students in some local authorities.¹⁷
27. Despite warm words on improving access to universities, in the 2024/25 budget the Finance Secretary confirmed that at least 1,200 funded university places will be cut amid a £28.5m reduction in university funding.
28. Yousaf pledged to work closely with Who Cares? Scotland to deliver the Promise during his leadership campaign¹⁸, but on the fourth anniversary of the Promise being published the charity criticised the lack of progress and warned the policy may not be fulfilled by 2030.¹⁹

¹⁶ <https://news.stv.tv/scotland/two-thirds-of-scottish-parents-leaving-work-or-reducing-hours-due-to-childcare-costs>

¹⁷ [Attendance and absence 2022-23](https://www.whocaresscotland.org/news/care-experienced-people-urge-humza-yousaf-to-keep-listening-to-them-if-appointed-as-the-next-first-minister/)

¹⁸ <https://www.whocaresscotland.org/news/care-experienced-people-urge-humza-yousaf-to-keep-listening-to-them-if-appointed-as-the-next-first-minister/>

¹⁹ <https://www.whocaresscotland.org/news/progress-of-the-promise/>

CRIME AND JUSTICE

29. Police Scotland have confirmed that their pilot of not investigating all crimes will be rolled out across Scotland. Far from “ensuring everyone from access to justice”, it is reported that this will result in 25,000 crimes not being investigated.²⁰
30. In 2023, the overall number of recorded crimes increased 5% compared to 2022, violent and sexual crimes both higher than pre-pandemic and housebreaking and shoplifting up 11% and 37% compared to 2022 respectively.²¹
31. In December 2023, Police Scotland started consultations on the closure of up to 29 Police Stations²² in communities across the country and have confirmed at least 3 of these will now be closed.²³
32. Since he was Justice Secretary, Humza Yousaf has promised to criminalise misogyny but three years on from the establishment of the working group and two year on from its report²⁴, a bill on misogynistic harassment is still to be introduced.
33. Despite warnings that HMP Barlinnie is at risk of “catastrophic failure” and is running at 140% overcapacity, timelines for the replacement have been pushed back against and may not start construction until 2026.²⁵
34. In July 2023, an Irish judge blocked the extradition of a prisoner to Scotland due to humanitarian grounds and the likelihood that his human rights would be breached in Scotland’s prisons.²⁶

²⁰ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/03/08/police-scotland-survey-completed-by-43-people/>

²¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/recorded-crime-scotland-year-ending-december-2023/documents/>

²² <https://news.sky.com/story/police-scotland-announces-29-stations-at-risk-of-closure-13030258>

²³ <https://news.stv.tv/west-central/police-confirm-closure-of-stations-in-edinburgh-aberdeen-and-lanarkshire>

²⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/misogyny-human-rights-issue/>

²⁵ <https://news.stv.tv/west-central/barlinnie-at-risk-of-failure-and-hmp-greenock-should-be-bulldozed-chief-prison-inspector-tells-mmps>

²⁶ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/irish-judge-blocks-extradition-because-scottish-prisons-are-inhumane-qm73dlg9z>

NET ZERO, ENERGY AND TRANSPORT

35. The Climate Change Committee has declared that the SNP Government's lack of comprehensive strategy, and prioritisation of talk over action, its 2030 net zero and climate goals are "no longer credible" and its actions "continue to fall far short of what is legally required."²⁷
36. In a SNP leadership debate in Inverness, Yousaf re-committed to dualling the A9 but in December 2023, his government confirmed that it would not be completed until 2035 – 28 years after the SNP first promised it.²⁸
37. The Ferguson's ferry saga has continued, with repeated delays to both the Glen Sannox and warnings that the Glen Rosa may not be delivered until 2025²⁹ and the total cost of the two ferries expected to be as much as £380 – almost four times the original budget.³⁰
38. Yousaf has talked about delivering a just transition for oil and gas workers but, in the 2024/25 budget, funding for the SNP's Just Transition Fund was cut from £50m to just £12.2m and the Green Jobs Fund was scrapped completely.
39. The SNP has also u-turned on its commitment to a windfall tax on oil and gas giants making record profits in the middle of a cost of living crisis – sitting to the right of even the UK Tory Government.
40. Nationalising ScotRail was supposed to be an opportunity to put passengers' needs first but the SNP have agreed to put up rail fares by 8.7%, compared to just 4.9% in England.
41. The First Minister was forced to delay the SNP's chaotic and flawed plans for a Deposit Return Scheme until 2025, resulting in the collapse of Circularity Scotland and the loss of up to 66 jobs and £9 million in taxpayers' money.³¹

²⁷ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2023-report-to-parliament/>

²⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-67771630>

²⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-67385499.amp>

³⁰ Updates to NZET Committee in Sep 2023 and Feb 2024: <https://www.parliament.scot/api/sitecore/CustomMedia/OfficialReport?meetingId=15502>; <https://www.parliament.scot/api/sitecore/CustomMedia/OfficialReport?meetingId=15502>

³¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-65973058>

HOUSING

42. During the SNP leadership campaign, Yousaf committed to “building more affordable homes across the country”³² but in December, internal government briefings conceded that the targets he pointed to were now at risk³³ and they have now been put under review.
43. The 2024/25 Budget cut the housing budget by over £190m, a 26% reduction, characterised as a “absolute hammer blow for tackling homelessness and poverty across Scotland”³⁴ and leading to accusations that the SNP were “choosing to let homelessness get worse”.³⁵
44. Despite repeated calls from housing and homelessness charities, and declarations from Scottish councils, the First Minister refuses to accept that Scotland is facing a housing emergency³⁶, with the Director of Shelter Scotland accusing the First Minister of gaslighting the public on progress to end homelessness.³⁷
45. 20,144 homelessness applications were made in the first six months of Humza Yousaf’s tenure at First Minister³⁸ and as of the end of September 2023 the number of households in temporary accommodation were at a record high, with 9,860 children living in temporary accommodation, a 3% increase from the 31st March 2023 when Yousaf first became First Minister.³⁹

³² <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/snp-election-what-will-humza-yousaf-mean-for-housing-80955>

³³ <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/110000-affordable-homes-pledge-under-threat-briefing-confirms>

³⁴ <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/budget-sector-hits-out-at-hammer-blow-affordable-housing-cuts>

³⁵ https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/scottish_government_gaslighting_public_on_progress_to_end_homelessness; https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/scottish_governments_chooses_to_let_homelessness_increase_in_todays_values_led_budget_says_shelter_scotland

³⁶ <https://news.stv.tv/scotland/10000-back-call-for-humza-yousaf-to-declare-housing-emergency>

³⁷ https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/media/press_releases/scottish_government_gaslighting_public_on_progress_to_end_homelessness

³⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-update-to-30-september-2023/>

³⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-in-scotland-update-to-30-september-2023>

SOCIAL JUSTICE

46. After becoming First Minister, Yousaf said his first mission was to tackle poverty in all its forms but the SNP are set to miss their interim child poverty reduction targets, with around 240,000 children still living in poverty⁴⁰ and recent statistics suggesting child poverty actually increased in 2022-23 to an estimated 26% of all children.⁴¹
47. Between April and September 2023, the Trussell Trust handed out 128,490 food bank parcels in Scotland – a 9% increase to the same period in 2022.⁴²
48. After becoming First Minister, Yousaf made much of increasing the Fuel Insecurity Fund to £30m, calling it a “vital lifeline” in the cost of living crisis, but in the 2024/25 Budget, the fund was then scrapped entirely.⁴³
49. Humza Yousaf promised a Social Security System that would treat people with “dignity, fairness and respect” but most recent statistics show that median waits for disability payments in Scotland are still longer than the equivalent waits elsewhere in the UK.⁴⁴
50. The SNP have a damning record on supporting disabled people – as of February 2024, there were at least 39,875 people with disabilities on housing waiting lists.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ <https://data.gov.scot/poverty/>

⁴¹ <https://data.gov.scot/poverty/download.html>

⁴² <https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/11/MYS-Scotland-Factsheet-2023.pdf>

⁴³ <https://www.gov.scot/news/more-funding-made-available-for-fuel-insecurity-fund/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/adult-disability-payment-high-level-statistics-to-31-october-2023/>;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/personal-independence-payment-statistics-to-october-2023>

⁴⁵ <https://www.scottishhousingnews.com/articles/almost-40000-disabled-people-on-social-housing-waiting-lists>