



Rhoda Grant

Scottish Labour MSP for the Highlands and Islands

19 April 2008

Future of Highland Health Services

Rhoda Grant, Highlands and Islands MSP, fears for the future of health services and staffing in the Highlands following a call from the Scottish Government that Health Boards make £154 million of savings this year.

This £154 million figure is set to rise to £478 million by financial year 2010-11 and Mrs Grant has written to the Chief Executive of Highland NHS Board asking the following questions:

If the NHS Board has been informed of the amount of efficiency savings that it is expected to achieve in this financial year and in the subsequent financial years to 2010-11, and what these amounts are.

If the health board has been given clear guidelines/instructions as to how these savings are to be made.

If it means that in the case of the Highland NHS Board, posts may be not be filled when vacancies arise.

Mrs Grant commented: "The Scottish Government puts great stock in its claims that it passes responsibility for budgets to our local authorities and health boards to identify local priorities.

"How hollow these words are – what Ministers are really saying is that these organisations bear the responsibility of managing the real terms cuts the Scottish Government is imposing.

"It's interesting that the Scottish Government can't set any specific targets on the services they want to improve, like meeting minimum class sizes – but they are clear about setting targets which they know will cut frontline posts and services.

"I look forward to hearing if the Tartan Tories are advising our Health Boards on where they are to make these 'efficiencies' – I'm pretty sure they are washing their hands of any responsibility."

ends

Rhoda Grant's website : www.rhodagrants.org.uk

Highlands and Islands Labour : www.handilabour.org.uk