

# Cabinet reshuffle at Holyrood



As Keith Brown, the newly elected Deputy Leader of the SNP steps down from the Cabinet to take charge of Scottish independence, several more resignations were handed in this afternoon.



Angela Constance MSP stepping down from the

## Cabinet

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport Shona Robison, and Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities Angela Constance have written to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to confirm they are stepping down from their posts.

The First Minister has paid tribute to their work in government and will announce her new Cabinet later this afternoon.

Minister for International Development and Europe Dr Alasdair Allan, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs Annabelle Ewing, and Minister for Mental Health Maureen Watt will also be leaving the government.



Dr Alasdair Allan stepping down from the government

Commenting on the reshuffle, **Labour Parliamentary Business Manager Rhoda Grant said:** “On jobs, schools and hospitals the SNP government has been out of touch and out of ideas for too long.

“On the day Nicola Sturgeon chose to shake up her government, she had to shelve her flagship Bill to reform the education system and oversaw the worst cancer waiting times on record.

“Meanwhile the economy secretary has been booted from his job to plan a referendum campaign, which says something about Keith Brown’s performance or the SNP’s priorities – or most likely both.

“This reshuffle is long overdue but the real change Scotland wants and needs won’t come from changing the odd Cabinet Secretary – it will come from changing the government.”

Commenting on the departure of Shona Robison, **Labour health spokesperson Anas Sarwar said:** “Nicola Sturgeon had to remove Shona Robison from the health brief. The problems in our health service had piled up on her watch on an unprecedented scale.

“Labour held the government to account on the daily basis on the NHS and we will continue to do so. Week after week at First Minister’s Questions Richard Leonard highlighted the problems to Nicola Sturgeon, and week after week this government hid behind NHS staff.

“The challenge for Shona Robison’s successor is to win the argument around the cabinet table for adequate funding and staffing of our health service.

“Ultimately our health service won’t be fixed by a new health secretary – it will be fixed by the next Labour government.”

Today’s reshuffle means that Health Secretary Shona Robison is to be replaced by Social Security minister Jeane Freeman.

Alison Johnstone MSP, Health and Social Security spokesperson for the Scottish Greens, said: “The role of Health Secretary is clearly one of the most challenging in Government. Shona Robison has shown serious commitment and I wish her well for the future.

“The NHS faces serious, systemic challenges, and they will not all be quick or easy to overcome. Staff and patients want to see meaningful improvements to services. GP recruitment and retention is a major problem in so many parts of Scotland, and our hospitals will take the strain if that isn’t addressed.

“The Greens want to see clearer leadership on priority areas like General Practice, mental health, and workforce planning across the health and social care sector. It is also time for

a renewed focus on how well our NHS is supporting the long term health of children and young people.”

Alison added: “Jeane Freeman has been an extremely effective Minister for Social Security and I have enjoyed working with her over the past two years. The Social Security Act was a landmark piece of legislation for the Scottish Parliament, and one which was strengthened by Ms Freeman’s work on it and her willingness to listen to other parties to and stakeholders. If, as we all hope, the new system will be respectful, dignified and more effective than the UK system it is in part replacing, then Jeane Freeman can take rightly take pride in that.

“I hope her successor – Shirley-Anne Somerville – will continue Ms Freeman’s work on social security in the same open, consultative manner.”

Patrick Harvie MSP, Co-convener of the Scottish Greens, said: “Two years on from the Holyrood election in which the SNP lost their majority, the need for bold action from Scottish Ministers has never been greater. We face serious threats from Brexit and the climate crisis but also opportunities to tackle inequality, create a fairer economy, and improve the education and transport people rely on every day.

“Green MSPs have been leading the change in this session of parliament, influencing budgets, the income tax system and social security legislation, and fighting for the environment. We’ll continue to bring constructive challenge to the new ministerial team.”