

#GE2019 SNP launch election campaign – NHS is ‘not for sale’

The SNP will take steps to protect the NHS across the UK from being dragged into trade deals or further privatised by a future UK Government, the party said today as it launched its campaign for the Westminster election.

The SNP manifesto will contain a commitment to bring forward an NHS Protection Bill. The Bill would explicitly prevent any future UK Government from signing up to any agreement that made the NHS, in any part of the UK, a bargaining chip of any kind in any future trade deals – something which could endanger the foundations of the health service as free at the point of need, and which could threaten to push up drug prices.

The Bill would also give a double-lock by requiring the explicit approval of the Scottish Parliament and Welsh and Northern Irish assemblies before any trade deal could be confirmed, with each devolved nation, having to agree that any deal would have no negative impact on their National Health Service – including on the pricing of medication – before any future UK Government could agree a deal.

Speaking ahead of the launch, the SNP Leader and Scotland’s First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: “A vote for the SNP is a vote to escape Brexit and to give people in the Scotland the chance to choose a better future as an independent country so we never have to worry about our NHS being sold off by a

Westminster government.

“The NHS in Scotland is run in Scotland, for Scotland and under the SNP it will always be in public hands. Our NHS is not for sale at any price.

“And while the Scottish Parliament has control of health policy, we cannot currently stop Westminster signing away that protection in a trade deal, or entering agreements that dramatically push up drug prices or risk our public services, including the NHS.

“Boris Johnson has been very clear about his desire for a post-Brexit trade deal with Donald Trump – and no one should underestimate the threat which that poses.

“So in order to deal with that immediate threat from the Tories’ post-Brexit plans the SNP will bring forward a bill that would protect the NHS across the whole of the UK from ever being harmed by a Tory-Trump trade deal.

“Our NHS is there to care for and protect us – now it’s our turn to stand up and protect the NHS.

“All parties say they oppose including the NHS in trade deals – so I challenge every party to today commit to backing this bill, and stopping the Tories trading our NHS for trade deals with Donald Trump.”