

Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond vows for free childcare ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Alex Salmond has vowed that his promised childcare revolution will be carried out only under independence, insisting that Westminster will never benefit from the scheme.

The First Minister says, following separation, the SNP aims to provide 1,140 hours of free care a year for all children, from the age of one until they start school.

But critics point out the proposed overhaul to the system can be carried out now, using powers already available to Holyrood ministers under devolution.

And a YouGov poll published yesterday revealed nearly two-thirds of Scots believe any improvements should be introduced immediately.

But Mr Salmond insists his plan cannot be implemented under the current set-up as then the UK Government would benefit from increased tax revenue arising from thousands of Scots mothers he expects to return to work.

He said: "Under independence, that money would stay in Scotland to help to pay for the expansion of childcare on a sustainable basis.

"A rise in the number of women in work of just two per cent would boost tax revenues by £200 million.

"If the rate reached Swedish levels - a six per cent rise - revenues would increase by £700 million."

- reprinted from the Scottish Express

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