



## Broken record

**IF any yardstick to measure the SNP's record in power is needed, the state of Scotland's health service would be a good place to start.**

As we report today, horrifying new analysis suggests that the number of people waiting more than 12 hours in emergency departments is now 99 times higher than it was 14 years ago, surging from 784 in 2011 to 76,346 last year.

That is a staggering figure, and it's a mark of the failure of successive health secretaries to fix the problem.

The depth of the issue is highlighted by the warning from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, which insists it must now be a "political priority" as lives are at risk.

Thousands of Scots are facing dire waits when they turn up at A&E seeking help from NHS staff who are already stretched to breaking point.

Health workers are doing their absolute best but the reality is the failure of SNP ministers to halt the crisis in the service makes it a near-impossible task.

They have neither the capacity or the resources to get people seen more quickly at A&E departments, which has resulted in shocking scenes such as patients left waiting in agony in hospital corridors to get a bed.

This is a horrendous situation, and the boasts of the SNP that Scotland has the "best performing" core A&E services in the UK is just downright shameful.

Health Secretary Neil Gray must grasp this issue and finally put an end to the awful decline in A&E performance we've endured for more than a decade.

**If he doesn't, he will join predecessors Michael Matheson and Humza Yousaf in a growing list of health ministers to have failed the people of Scotland.**

## Taking liberties

**WITH the first wave of nearly 400 criminals set to be released within days, victims will, quite understandably, be feeling hugely anxious.**

The SNP Government argues that these prisoners must be released as part of efforts to reduce the strain on the country's cramped prisons.

But, after dozens of those released last year re-offended and had to be returned to custody, innocent members of the public will rightly wonder whether their safety can be guaranteed.

The idea that those who break the law are allowed out of jail early for the purposes of a quick fix to an overcrowding problem sends the message that the country's justice system is a soft touch.

And as charity Victim Support Scotland says, it could even erode trust in the system itself, potentially deterring people from reporting crimes in the future. This would be a worrying precedent.

**Because, when people lose trust in the very system that is supposed to protect them, it will be very difficult to win them back.**

## EXPERT BACKS TV STAR'S ROMANCE REVIEW



# How to keep your relationship in tip Toff condition

**FORMER Made In Chelsea star Georgia Toffolo stunned fans after revealing she and BrewDog tycoon fiancé James Watt do quarterly reviews of their relationship.**

The telly favourite turned romance author said the pair sit down every three months to say what they love about each other and what they love about the relationship.

But in what Toff describes as the "savage" section, they address improvement areas.

Sex and relationship coach Gemma Nice says she also has regular reviews with her other half.

Gemma, right, said: "A quarterly review is great to keep the relationship alive and allows you both to say it how it is. It's like a company doing its quarterly review to make sure



By LYNN KERNAN  
Features Editor

things are staying in check. It also allows you to appreciate each other."

She added: "It's so healthy to keep tabs on where you both are within the relationship every three months."

"My husband and I usually have a coffee date every Friday morning and discuss things within our relationship, like any worries."

"I also get my clients to do this as it's a great way to see how the relationship is going, where it can be improved, how the communication, trust, intimacy, sex life is going. It allows you to be open and honest with each other."

When the expert gets her clients to check in with each other, she says it is vital to turn off devices and listen.

She added: "Do not interrupt each

other, and really take on board each other's concerns. I get my clients to sometimes sit back-to-back so you are physically touching each other. The other person cannot talk until instructed. This works really well when there is conflict."

Gemma, who has been married for 25 years and has two kids, says there are real benefits to regularly communicating, as it stops small problems from growing into insurmountable issues.

The love guru said: "The positives are you can keep an eye on where you are in the relationship and, if anything is starting to go astray, intervene early and sort it out before it escalates."

*"It allows you to be fully open and honest, which then moves into better intimacy and a better sex life."*

Heaping praise on your loved one and your partnership can boost their confidence, she insists.

It also deepens the bond. Gemma said: "It gives them

a sense of purpose and self-esteem. It also strengthens their confidence as well as the relationship, meaning both parties benefit.

"It improves relationship satisfaction because you are both communicating your needs to each other, making it easier for the relationship to progress and stay healthy."

And Gemma said quarterly reviews – more often found in an office setting – are a perfect example of why relationships need work.

She said: "A lot of people get stuck in a rut and don't want to fix things. This is where the relationship starts to dwindle. You have to work at a relationship."

"You wouldn't put fuel in your car and expect it to run. It's the same principle, you need to put the work in to get better benefits."

But opening up to your partner can also have a down side, if one is not fully on board with the idea.

Gemma said: "You could be seen to be over-analysing and being critical of the relationship, passing the blame. This might be seen as constantly looking for things to bring up at the quarterly meeting."

"It can also bring up smaller issues which might cause tension if not dealt with correctly."

Despite this, the love coach still says it is worth the risk as, like Toff and her soon-to-be husband, it helps you come out stronger.

Gemma added: "You need to go about it in a non-judgmental way, which means using 'I' statements."

"For example, 'I really appreciate the hard work you are putting into our relationship' instead of using 'you' statement – 'You make me feel sad when you don't put the work in'. It really reframes how you communicate with each other."

"By doing these kinds of things it makes the communication, trust and intimacy stronger in all areas of the relationship."

## 5 top tips to stay on track

● **Sit back to back when you are talking it out. Actively listen to each other, not shouting, and allowing each other to be heard. Don't interrupt and use "I" statements.**

● **Set boundaries and stick to them. If you say you are going out and will be back at a certain time, don't be later. This builds up trust.**

● **Be open and honest. If this seems hard, close your eyes, hold hands and breathe. Take in three deep breaths to feel calm.**

● **Keep emotions under control when stressed, anxious or worried. Doing self-care techniques, such as breath work, meditation or taking a bath, can help you relax.**

● **Try new things together and above all, have fun. As adults we seem to lose the ability to mess around.**



TAKING STOCK...  
James and Toff