

Funding the Future

Today is GERSday - the day when the Government Expendit.

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For the last few years I have been involved in debate on the quality of the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland statement. It is how I first got involved in Scottish issues. I realised that the statement was simply wrong. So I said so, with reasons attached.

Today sees the publication of the latest statement. It will be wrong. I gave some reasons why in a Twitter thread this morning:



But it's worse than this. Because as I noted last year, what GERS claims is that Scotland is responsible for most of the UK's deficit:

Table 1 told me most of what you need to know. It shows the net fiscal balances of Scotland and the UK as a whole since 1999. As GERS defines it:

Let me plot this, using the more extended time series data in the supporting files that the GERS web site provides. I have simply compared the two figures for Scotland with the UK as a whole net fiscal balance for each year:

I'll be candid: that makes not one iota of sense. For the record this is the proportion of population of the UK as a whole living in Scotland according to official estimates:

What GERS is asking us to believe is that with 8.2% of the UK population Scotland created between 54% and 60% of the UK deficit last year, depending on the basis used.

Bluntly, this is politically engineered nonsense, and it still astonishes me that the SNP government permit its publication when they know of these criticisms.

But let's see what this morning brings.