

Local papers should be given same support as retailers

20 May 2020



Local newspapers need the same financial support being offered to the retail, leisure and hospitality industry, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The party will table an amendment in Holyrood today seeking the increased assistance for one of the country's most under-pressure industries.

MSP Murdo Fraser said, given the Scottish Government had earmarked journalism as a key industry, they deserved the same level of support as others.

Some provisions have been made for increased advertising from the Scottish Government.

But given the local press has lost 75 per cent of advertising revenue and 25 per cent of circulation cash, it's not enough to guarantee the sector's future.

The amendment has been submitted to Stage Three of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill.

Scottish Conservative MSP Murdo Fraser said:

"Local newspapers have been rightly recognised as a key industry.

"Now they need the Scottish Government support which comes with this status.

"It would be relatively straightforward for the SNP government to provide local newspapers with the same support the retail, hospitality and leisure industry receives.

"Scotland's newspaper industry is vital to society and democracy at the best of times.

"But given the scale of the crisis we're living through, we need trusted news sources more than ever.

"The SNP must recognise that with an adequate package of support."

[Freeman fails to confirm patients discharged to care homes were Covid free](#)

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- Freeman fails to confirm patients discharged to care homes were Covid free

19 May 2020



Jeane Freeman, the Health Secretary has admitted that almost 40 percent of delayed discharge patients were discharged to care homes at the beginning of the Covid crisis, but failed to confirm they had been tested for the virus.

The Scottish Conservatives have branded this part of a 'combination of mistakes' that have contributed to the tragically high death toll in care homes.

The startling admission was in response to questions asked by Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary.

During the exchange Ms Freeman stated that 38% of delayed discharge patients were sent to care homes to free up hospital capacity but failed to confirm that they were all tested for Covid.

The Covid virus is now present in over 400 care homes where it has sadly cause more fatalities than in hospitals.

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary said:

"It is clear from the outset of the crisis that SNP Ministers were pressing Health Boards to discharge vulnerable delayed discharge patients from hospital into care homes regardless of testing.

"The fact that Ms Freeman is unable to confirm that almost 40% of delayed discharge patients released to care homes were virus free is deeply worrying.

"It's no wonder that Covid has exploded within the care home sector.

"This demonstrates an astounding complacency to the danger of this virus that has now ravaged care homes.

"Scottish care homes have seen more deaths than the rest of the UK, it seems this is due to a combination of mistakes made at the beginning of this crisis by the SNP government."

Sturgeon should apologise and face Holyrood over Nike cover-up

19 May 2020



Nicola Sturgeon owes an apology to businesses affected by the spreading of coronavirus at a business conference in Edinburgh, and should face the Scottish Parliament to answer questions on the matter.

The First Minister didn't inform the public about the outbreak at a Nike summit at the end of February.

Now it's been reported that, as well as sportswear delegates being hit by Covid-19, other businesses were impacted too.

That includes Lloyds staff who shared the Hilton Carlton Hotel facilities, and two other businesses who came into contact with those attending the event.

Despite an SNP commitment to trace coronavirus cases, Lloyds said it only learned that 20 of its workers were exposed through media reports.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said Ms Sturgeon should apologise to businesses who weren't told of the risks.

He added that she should come to the Scottish Parliament and face scrutiny over the matter.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"Nicola Sturgeon never tires of telling us she's in sole charge of this, and that she's being as transparent as possible with the public.

"Yet when the first test of transparency and accountability arrived at the end of February, she was found wanting.

"The First Minister claims she wants to treat Scots like adults amid this pandemic, yet crucial information about how the coronavirus entered Scotland was kept secret from the public for months

"Now we know it wasn't just the Nike delegates who were affected, but at least three other Edinburgh businesses.

"Day after day, new information on this scandal is exposed, as is the role of senior SNP government figures, including the First Minister, in hushing it up.

“It is time Nicola sturgeon delivered a full statement on this matter and submitted herself to questioning by the whole Scottish Parliament”

[Call for SNP to lift the ‘wedding bells ban’](#)

18 May 2020



The Scottish Conservatives will tomorrow seek to lift the ban on marriages taking place in Scotland as part of emergency coronavirus legislation.

Although there’s no formal prevention in place, registrars have stopped taking weddings for fear of being overwhelmed by the increased number of deaths occurring in recent weeks.

Now Scottish Conservative MSP Adam Tomkins will put down amendments to the legislation in Holyrood to change that.

He wants couples to be able to undertake formal marriage and civil partnership proceedings, providing they can be done in accordance with attendance restrictions and social distancing measures.

The Glasgow MSP pointed out that the ability to marry was a human right, and not one which should be restricted during a period of lockdown.

Scottish Conservative MSP Adam Tomkins said:

“We all understand why the restrictions are in place, and that it would be impossible to throw large wedding parties at the moment.

“But the fundamental right for a couple to get married is a human right, and not one that should be restricted.

“There are plenty of places in Scotland where couples could safely get married, with the required three other people in attendance, and a necessary social distance.

“There are couples around Scotland who want to take this next step in their lives, and the Scottish Government should be now allowing them to do so.

“Lifting this wedding bells ban would go some way to achieving this.”

Freeman's testing announcement 'falls well short'

18 May 2020



Jeane Freeman's announcement that care home staff will be offered coronavirus testing "falls well short" of what's required, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

The health secretary said today that all workers in care facilities could all be tested, even if they weren't displaying symptoms.

However, she stopped short of offering the same assistance to care home residents – hundreds of whom are dying from Covid-19 each week – and carers working in community settings.

Earlier today, the Scottish Conservatives called on the SNP government to utilise more testing capacity to reach the estimated 90,000 people living and working in care homes.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"This still falls well short of the comprehensive action needed to protect care workers and those they care for.

"What we need is a commitment that, in addition to care home staff, all residents and community care workers will also be included in a repeat testing policy.

"Given the scale of the challenges being faced in our care sector and the tragic loss of life in care homes and among care workers, nothing less than a 100% testing policy, extending to all staff and residents, should be acceptable.

"Many people will be wondering how many lives in our care homes could have been saved if a more comprehensive testing regime had been put in place weeks ago.

"That's why it is critical that the full test coverage so obviously needed is now immediately implemented by the Scottish Government."