

Shielding guidance must be reviewed every 3 weeks

9 Jun 2020



The Scottish Conservatives are calling for shielding advice to be formally reviewed every three weeks, similar to the lockdown reviews currently undertaken by the SNP government.

Yesterday the First Minister announced that shielding Scots must follow strict guidelines until the end of July.

This vulnerable group will be allowed to leave the house for exercise from the 18th June onwards, when the next lockdown review takes place, but will not be able to meet anyone from another household in the open air, even if they currently live alone.

This blanket ban has been implemented despite the SNP's own new guidance stating "the chance of catching the virus when you are outdoors, keeping two metres away from anyone else and not meeting with other people is very low."

Restrictions for shielded individuals have been relaxed elsewhere in the UK, with those living alone already allowed to exercise and socialise outdoors.

This call comes as Scotland has recorded no new deaths from Covid for the last two days.

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary said:

"This vulnerable group has already been shielding for months and further isolation until the end of July without any chance of review, is increasingly difficult for them to bear.

"Of course we want to keep vulnerable people safe, but Scotland has recorded no new deaths from Covid for two days now and even the scientists agree that the chance of catching the virus outdoors, with social distancing, is very low.

"Shielding guidance must be formally reviewed every three weeks, just like lockdown reviews, as both are informed by scientific advice.

"The rest of the UK has already relaxed these guidelines significantly, it seems strange that the Scottish guidelines are so restrictive.

"In some cases, where people live alone, the lack of direct human contact must be severely affecting.

"Many shielded people will find the thought of another seven weeks of total

lockdown without any reappraisal or explanation particularly tough.”

[Sturgeon challenged on why she ignored WHO testing guidance](#)

8 Jun 2020



Nicola Sturgeon has been challenged on her claims she followed WHO guidance in full in the immediate response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Last week, the First Minister told Jackson Carlaw: “All the guidance that the Scottish Government has issued ... has been consistent with the guidance, the technical guidance that the WHO has set out.”

However, the Scottish Conservative leader has now written to Ms Sturgeon identifying key parts of WHO guidance which haven’t been followed by the SNP.

He cited two key aspects of WHO instructions on testing from March.

One states: “Isolate Covid-19 patients until they have two negative laboratory tests for Covid-19 taken at least 24 hours apart after the resident’s symptoms have resolved.”

The other implores governments to isolate those patients for two weeks if testing isn’t available.

Neither of those points made their way into public health guidelines in Scotland, and the party has now urged the First Minister to correct the official record.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Nicola Sturgeon was quite certain in responding to my concerns that she had followed WHO guidance to the letter.

“We now know that simply wasn’t the case.

“She should correct the official record, and explain why this guidance from the WHO wasn’t passed on in Scotland.

“Testing has been the biggest area of failure for this SNP government, and vulnerable patients and the staff who bravely look after them deserve answers.”

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8 Jun 2020



The Scottish Government has indefinitely delayed the second annual progress report on child poverty due to coronavirus.

The open-ended delay was announced by Aileen Campbell, the Communities Secretary, in response to a Government Initiated Question today.

The annual progress report on child poverty was introduced in the Child Poverty Act 2017 to monitor the Scottish Government's progress towards a range of targets designed to reduce child poverty.

In the first report last year, it was clear that significant progress in this area was still required from the Scottish Government.

The Scottish Conservatives have questioned the need for the delay and demanded a new publication date is announced immediately.

Jamie Greene, Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary said:

"It is totally unacceptable that this important progress report has been indefinitely delayed.

"This assessment is an important benchmarking exercise to ensure that the Scottish Government is making progress towards the ambitious targets the Child Poverty Act set out.

"Given the current economic situation, monitoring the trajectory of child poverty could not be more important.

"We have serious concerns that vulnerable children are being left behind in this crisis as a result of the economic downturn, the lack of formal education and for some, worrying domestic situations.

"We already know that many vulnerable children are falling through the cracks in support and monitoring with only 1% of all children attending educational hubs, a worryingly low statistic.

“While some timescale alteration might have been understandable an indefinite delay is utterly unreasonable.

“The SNP Government must declare a new publication date for this report immediately, or it looks increasingly like the Scottish Government is simply burying bad news.”

Sturgeon should cut beleaguered Freeman loose

8 Jun 2020



Nicola Sturgeon must part company with beleaguered health secretary Jeane Freeman before even more mistakes are made in the running of Scotland’s NHS.

The Scottish Conservatives said “enough is enough” in relation to Ms Freeman’s position after more revelations emerged today.

And the party has now identified 10 further occasions where the health secretary has been lucky to keep her job as the health service north of the border continues to flounder.

It was reported today that frontline hospital staff are still not routinely tested for coronavirus, despite being months into the crisis, and that she doesn’t know when that will change.

It also emerged that thousands of shielded patients have been wrongly sent a letter telling them it’s safe to leave the house.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said a number of other blunders during the Covid-19 pandemic should have cost Ms Freeman her role.

That includes the cover-up of the now infamous Edinburgh Nike conference; directly contradicting the First Minister on scientific evidence relating to asymptomatic patients; and misleading the public about the number of elderly patients discharged from hospital to care homes despite not being routinely tested for the virus.

In addition, she failed for weeks to pass onto supermarkets details of vulnerable patients and threatened to name and shame health boards for her own failure to properly roll out coronavirus testing in care homes. And prior to the coronavirus pandemic, a number of failings had occurred on Ms Freeman’s watch.

Opposition parties had already demanded her departure over infection deaths

of children at the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Glasgow, some of which were reportedly covered up.

Two-thirds of Scots are served by health boards which have been placed by the SNP government in “special measures”.

The 12-week treatment time guarantee – despite being written into law by the SNP – has never been met, with cancer targets also well off-course.

And Ms Freeman was accused of lying by senior NHS Lothian chiefs over significant delays to the new Sick Kids hospital in Edinburgh.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Jeane Freeman was already on borrowed time before coronavirus hit.

“But as this crisis has unfolded, a number of issues have unfolded on her watch which were completely avoidable, and enough is enough.

“The testing structure under the SNP has been a disaster, to the point where care homes have been left in the lurch, and now she can’t even say when hospital staff will be routinely tested.

“The misplaced loyalty shown by the First Minister to her health secretary is having a negative impact on the NHS.

“A litany of problems had built up before, not least infection deaths of children at the SNP’s flagship hospital in Glasgow, and the continued unacceptable delays of the new Sick Kids in Edinburgh.

“These have been compounded by a dismal performance during the pandemic too.

“Nicola Sturgeon has to take the blinkers off and find someone who can actually get on top of these problems.”

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- Health Secretary fails to give timescale for routine testing of hospital staff

7 Jun 2020



The Health Secretary has admitted that hospital staff are 'not routinely' tested for Covid, and she doesn't know when they will be, despite a pledge to dramatically increase this regime weeks ago.

This compounds the SNP's failure to test care home staff recently highlighted by the Scottish Conservatives.

The Health Secretary made the admission on this morning's Sunday Politics Scotland.

Ms Freeman went on to admit that she also didn't know where patients who had acquired Covid in hospital had died.

The Scottish Conservatives have strongly criticised these admissions and stated the Health Secretary appears to have 'completely lost her grip' on the Covid crisis.

Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative leader said:

"The Health Secretary appears to have completely lost her grip on the Covid crisis.

"The SNP government promised to dramatically increase hospital staff testing but still, weeks later, not only is nothing in place, Ms Freeman cannot tell us when it will be.

"Ms Freeman couldn't even give the public basic information about where patients who contracted Covid in hospital died.

"The SNP abandoned care homes to be ravaged by Covid, they appear to have done the same thing to hospitals also.

"Jeane Freeman's excuses keep getting thinner meanwhile thousands of tests are unused each day.

"Nicola Sturgeon says she takes responsibility for her government's approach to Covid and I agree – the First Minister is responsible for these catastrophic failures."