

Council chief warns care staff under 'unprecedented strain'

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A top council official in Scotland's capital city has warned that care home staff are under "unprecedented strain" as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

It comes as residential facilities across the country continue to struggle to access personal protective equipment (PPE) weeks into the crisis.

Two homes in Edinburgh are the latest to speak out about supply concerns, as the death toll in Scottish care facilities is expected to overtake hospitals by next week.

And the Scottish Conservatives have also urged the SNP government to match a pledge to allow essential workers and their families to book a Covid-19 test online.

The service south of the border is now open to 10 million, but no such commitment has been made by SNP ministers.

Today's *Edinburgh Evening News* report remarks by the chief officer of the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, Judith Proctor.

She said in a memo: *"The increase in staff self-isolating or COVID-19 positive may place unprecedented strain on workforce numbers. Staff working in care homes, often supported by District Nurses, are skilled at delivering high quality palliative and end of life care. However, it is recognised that the trauma of multiple residents dying in a short period of time while staff are worried about their own and their family's health puts an additional burden of distress on those delivering care."*

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"It's increasingly clear that care homes are really bearing the brunt of this crisis, and haven't been given the same priority as hospitals.

"There are still residential facilities not getting access to the PPE they need, and that's not something the hardworking staff ought to be worrying about.

"There are also huge concerns over testing.

"The UK Government is now allowing millions to register for these tests, and that's something the Scottish Government should be looking at too.

“We can’t have a situation where carers in Scotland are getting reduced protection, and reduced testing, than their counterparts elsewhere in the UK.”