

Freeman's testing announcement 'falls well short'

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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."