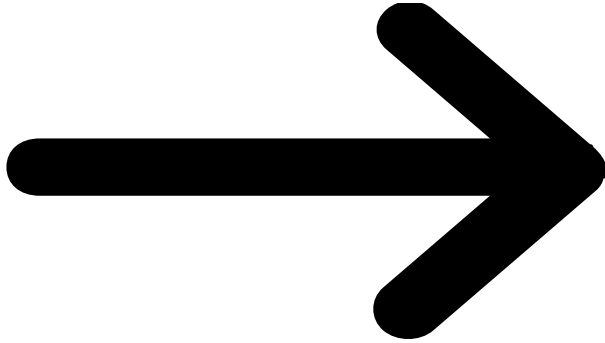


Health Secretary has lost the confidence of the public

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Jackson Carlaw, leader of the Scottish Conservatives, has written to the First Minister and stated that the Health Secretary, Jeane Freeman no longer has the confidence of the public.

The letter comes after it emerged that almost 1,000 hospital patients were discharged to care homes before compulsory Covid testing was enforced, significantly more than previously stated.

The shock figures were revealed in the media last night and are over three times higher than the previous number given by Health Secretary, Jeane Freeman.

Jackson states to the First Minister, "it was not inevitable care homes became the frontline, a serious strategic error made it so, and that you and the Health Secretary have, not for the first time in this crisis, failed to be transparent with key information."

He goes onto write, "it is surely impossible to see how in respect of Coronavirus in care homes, public confidence can be maintained in the Cabinet Secretary for Health."

Ms Freeman has previously stated that only 300 patients were discharged from hospitals to care homes during March to April 15 this year, prior to the new testing regime, as health boards raced to free up capacity.

The real figure, confirmed by the Scottish Government last night, is that 921 patients were released from hospital into care homes during this period.

The fact is that the total figure could be even higher as this number does not include April 15 onwards.

Jackson Carlaw, Scottish Conservative leader said:

"This astonishing revelation poses real questions about the Health Secretary's competence, honesty and transparency.

“The care sector is at crisis point and has been for weeks.

“It was not inevitable that care homes became the frontline, a serious strategic error on behalf of the SNP government made it so.

“In the light of these events, it is impossible to see how public confidence can be maintained in the Cabinet Secretary for Health.

“Jeane Freeman simply can't be trusted on care home coronavirus.”