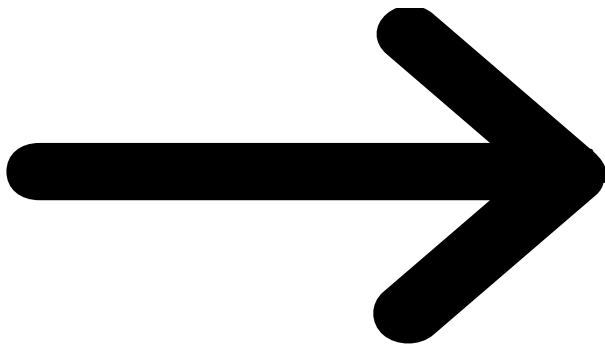


No part of Scotland should be left out of Army mobile testing drive

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No part of Scotland should be left behind as the SNP finally enlists the Army to help fight the coronavirus crisis.

At the weekend it was confirmed that the Scottish Government would finally agree to calls from the Scottish Conservatives to use the military across the country.

But this morning, health secretary Jeane Freeman said only certain parts of Scotland – in the south and Highlands – would initially benefit from the move.

Now Jackson Carlaw, leader of the Scottish Conservatives, has urged the SNP not to forget about the central belt, north east and other areas in the country.

The Scottish Conservatives have previously called for greater army support and the comprehensive roll out of mobile testing – both of which are necessary due to Scotland's challenging population distribution.

Care homes have been experiencing a worrying surge in Covid-19 cases with numbers of deaths in care homes widely expected to overtake the number of deaths in hospital this week.

Furthermore, testing sites have been set up in various parts of Scotland, but take-up in some has been low.

Rolling out the mobile testing units to care homes in all regions could significantly help the residences identify those carrying the virus and help to contain it.

The UK armed forces have already contributed to efforts to cope with the coronavirus pandemic, supporting the roll out of protective equipment, assisting with the new testing facilities in Glasgow, and patient transport.

Jackson Carlaw, leader of the Scottish Conservatives said:

“We know that the key to containing this virus and ending the lockdown is a significant increase in testing.

“While the Scottish Government has already indicated they will roll out mobile testing in Highlands and the South of Scotland – it simply isn’t enough.

“I urge the Scottish government to deploy the Army mobile testing units the length and breadth of the country now.

“Our armed forces have already demonstrated their incredible competence and speed, they are capable of meeting this increased challenge.

“Regrettably, the Scottish government has previously been slow to act, particularly on PPE, it must now pick up the pace.

“Care homes are the latest battleground and the Scottish government must act now to stop this virus in its tracks.”