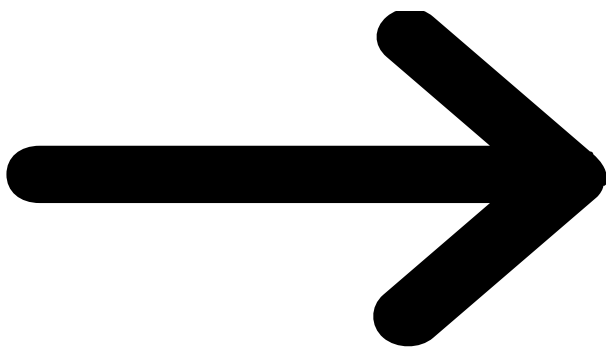


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A public disagreement between Nicola Sturgeon and her health secretary on Covid-19 scientific advice proves the need for more transparency, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Today, the First Minister denied she'd ever claimed that her advisers had told her there was no chance of asymptomatic patients passing on coronavirus to others.

Less than an hour later, Jeane Freeman directly contradicted that, saying: "The clear advice we were receiving from scientific experts was there was no transmission from asymptomatic individuals."

The clash comes on the same day the SNP government refused to publish exchanges its chief medical officer had conducted with UK counterparts.

The Scottish Conservatives said the nationalists should abandon their secretive ways and ensure all key documents were published to ensure better transparency.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"The inconsistencies between the First Minister and her health secretary could hardly be more blatant on this crucial matter.

"One says scientific advice showed asymptomatic patients couldn't transmit the disease, the other says the opposite.

"Of course, this could be settled if the SNP government was willing to publish these key documents.

"Instead, it reverts to its secretive ways in a bid to stop the Scottish public finding out the truth.

"That's unacceptable government at any time, let alone under these most serious of circumstances."