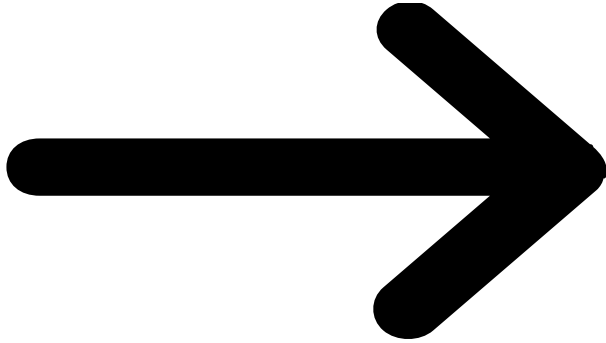


Sturgeon faces major questions on UK care homes claim

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Nicola Sturgeon's repeated assertion that UK stats under-reported care home deaths is now in serious question, after it emerged Scotland itself may have missed hundreds of Covid-19 deaths.

The First Minister repeated her claim at the weekend that she was sceptical about how the UK Government collected and published figures in relation to coronavirus fatalities in care homes.

That, she said, was why Scotland's care home death rate appeared far higher than the UK average.

However, it was reported this morning that up to 600 deaths in care homes north of the border have been missed off official coronavirus data.

Research showed that while there were 2350 additional deaths in those facilities compared to last year, only 1749 were blamed on Covid-19.

It follows an admission from Miss Sturgeon that she didn't fully appreciate the risk of asymptomatic hospital patients being discharged straight into care homes.

And today, a major care home operator said the sector felt "betrayed" by the SNP government's approach.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"For several weeks now Nicola Sturgeon has fed into the public debate her belief that the UK Government was under-counting the number of care home deaths.

"That's her defence to the fact Scottish care home deaths seem so high.

"But now it has emerged that it is her government doing the under-counting, and that the situation in care homes is even worse than the catastrophic situation we already understood it to be.

"She can no longer stand in front of the country and use this feeble excuse.

"Instead, we need a full public inquiry into the number of care home deaths, and for immediate improvements in testing."