

# SNP must 'up its game' on care home testing

11 May 2020



The Scottish Government must “up its game” and start publishing regular updates on care home coronavirus testing, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Residential facilities across the country are now in full crisis mode, with some homes recording several deaths of their service-users since the Covid-19 outbreak.

At the same time, testing across the board has remained low north of the border, despite SNP promises to ramp up its approach.

Some reports today suggested it was half the rate of England’s.

Now shadow health secretary Miles Briggs has demanded the number of care workers tested is published regularly, in a bid to increase rates and reduce the spread of infection.

He pointed out that many care workers could have coronavirus, but are not displaying any symptoms.

And he added more had to be done to ensure the infection “doesn’t get through the door” of care homes, at which point it is passed onto extremely vulnerable patients.

## **Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:**

“There’s no doubt that the biggest fight against coronavirus is now being fought by our carers in residential settings and the community.

“Testing of those workers is absolutely critical, and it needs to be done regularly.

“We are now several weeks into this crisis, yet across Scotland huge numbers of carers still have never been tested for Covid-19.

“We have to act to ensure coronavirus doesn’t get through the door of care homes, because we know how devastating it can be once it does.

“The SNP needs to up its game on testing, and publishing regular figures of how many carers have been tested will help ensure that happens.”

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# Key questions Sturgeon must answer on Lockdown

11 May 2020



Jackson Carlaw has written to the First Minister demanding answers on a series of lockdown-related issues.

Nicola Sturgeon has taken a divergent approach to the UK Government on easing measures, arguing that her evidence shows the restrictions must continue.

Now the Scottish Conservative leader has set out a series of demands so the people of Scotland can better understand her position.

They include:

- Publishing what the SNP government believes the 'R' number to be in Scotland, and how it thinks that compares with the UK equivalent, on a daily basis
- Why the Scottish Government believes the 'R' number reduction has stalled
- To what extent that stalling is driven by the crisis in care homes
- Why the SNP believes the 'R' number is higher in Scotland, despite going into lockdown at roughly the same time as the rest of the UK

He added that, if Scotland is to take a slower approach than other parts of the UK, the scientific evidence for this approach must be made public and updated regularly.

**Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:**

"Like everyone else, we want to see a strategy that saves lives, protects the NHS and moves towards coming out of lockdown when it's safe to do so.

"There are emerging differences between the approach of the UK Government and the Scottish Government, and that will have an impact on the lives of Scots, and the wellbeing of the economy.

"So the SNP government now needs to set out exactly why this approach is different, and what evidence it is based upon.

"We can't simply have weeks go by where Nicola Sturgeon asserts a position without the detailed reasons for it being revealed."

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# Scottish Government must plan to clear backlog of operations

5 May 2020



The Scottish Conservatives have called for the Scottish Government to publish a plan outlining how they will clear the backlog of operations created while the NHS concentrates on Covid-19.

The call comes as the latest figures show that the number of planned operations for March this year in Scotland has fallen over 30% compared to March last year.

In addition, the number of cancelled operations for the same month has almost doubled to 15% compared to March 2019.

The Scottish Conservatives have said that it is understandable that the NHS has been prioritising Covid patients but the Scottish Government must outline a plan to clear this backlog and ensure there isn't any avoidable suffering beyond the pandemic.

## **Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary said:**

"Our NHS has rightly diverted time and resources to tackling Covid-19 and we wouldn't expect anything else.

"But the dramatic reduction in hospital operations is not without cost and must be reversed as soon as possible.

"The Scottish Government must put a plan in place to clear these operations or Covid could cause even greater suffering.

"Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak SNP Ministers were failing to meet their own waiting times targets.

"It is clear that for many patients the wait to get the treatments and operations they need is going to be significantly longer.

"I am enormously grateful to everyone working in our NHS right now – the Scottish Government must plan now so doctors and nurses can continue to save lives now and in the future."

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- Don't leave elderly behind in Covid-19 technology drive, SNP told

5 May 2020



Elderly and other vulnerable groups cannot be left behind as ministers turn to technology to tackle the coronavirus crisis, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Nicola Sturgeon revealed yesterday she would launch a mobile app to allow people to register their own symptoms, should they occur, which would allow for geographical tracking of the disease.

It's part of a wider plan to increase the test, trace and isolate scheme.

But serious questions have been raised about the practicalities of the system, and what co-operation there would be with the rest of the UK in its roll-out.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw pointed out that the elderly, the people most vulnerable to Covid-19, could struggle to use the technology.

And he said anything other than a four-nations approach could also cause problems, especially for those in the south of Scotland, and as time goes on with increased travel across the UK.

## **Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:**

"Of course technology should be used where it can be shown to help in the fight against coronavirus.

"But we need to remember that a significant proportion of the population – which happens to be those most at risk from the virus – won't be able to easily access or use this app.

"We need urgent clarification from the Scottish Government about how it intends to include elderly people in this drive, and what plans it has to ensure no-one is left behind.

"We also need to know if this is a Scotland-only app, or if Nicola Sturgeon will be seeking to work on a UK-wide basis.

"It will be hugely confusing for people in the south of Scotland who work in

the north of England to make use of something that's not UK-wide.

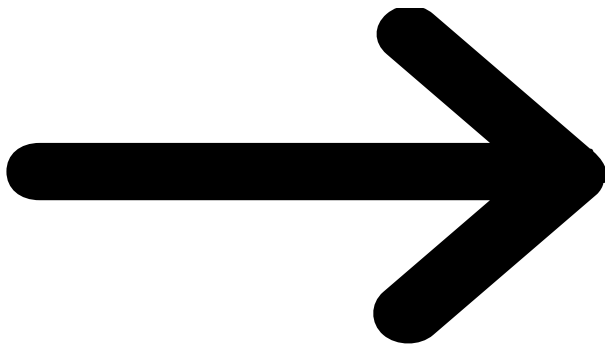
“And as time goes on, and travel between Scotland and the rest of the UK resumes, we can't afford for technological hiccups on the basis the SNP wanted an app exclusive to Scotland.”

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4 May 2020



The SNP cannot afford to miss its newly-set target for test, trace and isolate, for the sake of those whose health is suffering through lockdown.

Nicola Sturgeon announced today that she wanted to get more than 15,000 tests a day ready by the end of May, and recruit 2000 staff to operate the scheme.

That would mean a massive increase in testing capacity from the current position.

The Scottish Conservatives have warned that, given this initiative will be key to lifting elements of the lockdown, ministers had to get it “absolutely right”.

Leader Jackson Carlaw said the physical and mental health of the population was beginning to suffer, as Ms Sturgeon announced another potential three weeks of stringent measures.

**Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:**

“These aren't targets the SNP can afford to miss.

“As we enter yet another potential period of extended lockdown, time is running out for those whose health is suffering under these unprecedented measures.

“If this test, trace and isolate drive will help ease lockdown, then it’s essential the SNP government gets it absolutely right.

“This cannot just be another example of Nicola Sturgeon’s government saying one thing and delivering something considerably less.

“All over Scotland, the physical and mental health of people is suffering, and they cannot afford to endure this longer than is necessary.”