

# SNP already due to miss affordable homes target

3 Apr 2020



The Scottish government has confirmed that it will miss its targets on affordable homes, fuel poverty and energy efficiency measures.

The Scottish Conservatives have stated that, even without the impact of Covid19, the SNP government was on course to miss its affordable homes target of 50,000 houses by May 2021.

In a Scottish parliamentary written answer Kevin Stewart, Minister for housing stated that due to the 'effective lock down' it is necessary to have a 'pause in the delivery of affordable homes.'

However, the latest figures show that between April 2016 and December 2019 31,000 homes had been completed. In addition, at present 9,000 new homes are being completed in Scotland per year.

These figures suggest that even with a final surge the SNP were on course to miss their own target by at least 4,000 homes.

**Graham Simpson, Scottish Conservative shadow housing and communities secretary said:**

"This is understandably frustrating, particularly for those waiting for a home.

"The fight against Covid19 is affecting every part of Scottish life and it is right that we put people first and do everything possible to stop the spread of this virus.

"However, the SNP was already on course to miss the affordable homes target by some margin.

"Missing these important targets is extremely disappointing and will obviously hit the most vulnerable hardest."

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## Elderly patients shouldn't be pushed

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3 Apr 2020



Concerns have been raised about 'do not resuscitate' orders after an elderly lady was "pushed" into signing one as a result of coronavirus pressures.

It was reported this morning that an 86-year-old in Tayside agreed to the procedure – should the circumstances occur – following a phonecall from her local GP.

Her family say the practice cited "Covid-19 protocol" in making the arrangement, despite the pensioner suffering from memory problems.

It was only when relatives found the subsequent copy of the form in the woman's house that they realised the order had been signed.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs has now called for clarification on the matter from the SNP government.

He said, although the NHS will come under immense pressure because of coronavirus, that wasn't a reason to hurry elderly people into making major decisions like DNR.

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

"Everyone accepts the NHS has to make changes as we battle this crisis.

"But pushing elderly and very vulnerable patients into agreeing life-ending procedures over the phone is utterly unacceptable.

"This kind of thing should never happen within the NHS, irrespective of the challenges it is facing.

"This lady and her family deserve a very thorough apology.

"The SNP government must also intervene and reveal to patients if this is indeed new guidance being given to GPs.

"If it is, patients right across the country will be furious."

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# [Confirmation that horticulture businesses can continue to operate](#)

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3 Apr 2020



The Scottish government has confirmed that horticulture companies may continue to operate, provided they adhere to strict guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid19.

This was confirmed in a letter to Rachael Hamilton, Scottish Conservative shadow rural economy secretary.

Mrs Hamilton raised the matter after the police visited a horticulture business and ordered it to shut down in compliance with the latest government rules.

In the letter, Fergus Ewing, Scottish rural economy secretary states that operations can “continue” provided businesses protect the safety and welfare of their staff, keep up to date with the latest guidance and demonstrate their adherence to social distancing guidelines in their businesses and to the public.

This comes just hours after business leaders in Scotland called for “cooperation, consistency of policy and clarity of message across all parts of the UK.”

**Rachael Hamilton, Scottish Conservative shadow rural economy secretary said:**

“I am extremely grateful and pleased that the Scottish government has acted so quickly and confirmed that horticultural businesses can stay open at this time.

“All open businesses must put their staff first, ensure their safety and the safety of the public.

“Horticultural businesses are often associated with farming businesses and, without them, we will undermine our ability to provide food for Scottish people in the coming months.

“Earlier today the business community called for clarity and consistency from the Scottish government.

“Hopefully this letter will give businesses and the police clear guidance so

that horticulture businesses can stay open while operating safely.”

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## Accuracy of coronavirus fatality stats vital

2 Apr 2020



The Scottish Conservatives have said the daily fatality statistics in relation to the coronavirus must be “robust and reliable”.

It comes after 50 new deaths were reported from the virus today north of the border.

However, 40 of those had occurred at a much earlier date, but their recording had been delayed, the First Minister confirmed today.

It brings the total number of Covid-19 deaths in Scotland to 126.

**Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:**

“The daily reporting of coronavirus deaths in Scotland is hugely important for a variety of reasons.

“These statistics have to be robust and reliable.

“We can’t have a repeat of a situation where scores of deaths have suddenly been revealed which actually should have been included at an earlier stage.

“That causes alarm and confusion among the public when anxieties are already sky high.

“The SNP government needs to assure the public that it will do everything possible so this kind of delay won’t occur again.”

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## Coronavirus halts benefits transfer

1 Apr 2020



The Scottish Government has requested a delay to the transfer of new benefits powers to Holyrood following the coronavirus pandemic.

Social security secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville confirmed today that the UK Government had agreed to continue paying disability benefits including Child Disability Payment and Personal Independence Payment, a scheme the SNP government wanted to replace.

She told MSPs: "I had anticipated laying out my plans for launching Scottish disability benefits this week.

"Work had been continuing at pace and I planned to lay out plans for rolling out Child Disability Payment and the Scottish replacement for Personal Independence Payment to the previously agreed timescales alongside, importantly, our plans for a new method of decision making which would in effect end face-to-face assessments.

"Those timescales are clearly no longer possible."

And she added: "I have therefore spoken to UK ministers and we have agreed they will continue delivering disability benefits for existing and new Scottish clients over a longer transition period."

Shadow social security secretary Graham Simpson said the delays were understandable given the challenges presented by Covid-19, but noted that the SNP government had been struggling to meet these deadlines in any case.

**Scottish Conservative shadow social security secretary Graham Simpson said:**

"It's disappointing to see the roll-out of future benefits delayed, but in the circumstances we understand the reasons.

"The secure transfer of these powers has to be the absolute priority.

"Moving over powers that the Scottish Government isn't ready for would only hurt the most vulnerable in society.

"Fortunately, the UK Government has been flexible on this, and that again underlines the importance of both of Scotland's governments working together closely.

"There were already question marks about whether these benefits would be delivered on time by the SNP government, but this crisis takes that particular challenge out of their hands for the time being."