

Number of coronavirus tests hits new Low

1 Jun 2020



The number of coronavirus tests carried out yesterday (Sunday) was the lowest since the new drive began, it has emerged.

Just 2729 tests took place, despite there now being capacity for 15,000 per day in Scotland.

The Scottish Government began publishing capacity targets and testing numbers daily on April 30, with Nicola Sturgeon claiming she wanted to carry out 10,000 per day.

But combined totals show there has been no serious improvement, with the number taking place yesterday 42 per cent lower than the previous Sunday.

All over Scotland care homes have said their staff and residents need more testing, yet the SNP government has repeatedly failed to take these tests to the place which need them.

And today, Cancer Research UK said patients and staff would need 3000 tests a day in order for cancer treatment services to resume safely.

Already, unused tests account for more than 200,000 north of the border, a record the Scottish Conservatives have repeatedly attacked.

The 2729 tests taking place on Sunday included both Scottish and UK Government facilities.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“For weeks now the SNP government has been told to carry out more tests to help Scotland beat this virus.

“But instead, the number has now plummeted to the lowest since this new drive began.

“That’s alarming and points to huge failings on testing at the hands of this SNP government.

“It was clear weeks ago that the SNP couldn’t just stand and wait for people to come to them, and it had to get out and take these tests to those who need it most.

“That hasn’t happened, and there’s been no explanation as to why.

“If the SNP doesn’t get its house in order in terms of testing, more people

will die and Scotland's move out of lockdown will be put in jeopardy."

[UK Government's coronavirus support for Scotland tops £10bn](#)

1 Jun 2020



UK Government spending to help Scotland fight the impact of coronavirus has exceeded £10 billion, new analysis has revealed.

Last week, the SNP admitted the bulk of emergency cash had come from Westminster.

Now fresh figures have revealed the true scale of UK support for dealing with the pandemic.

Barnett Consequentials from spending in England has resulted in £3.5 billion for the Scottish Government to distribute.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak's job retention scheme has led to spending of £4.8 billion, resulting in the protection of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

Nearly £700 million has been invested in supporting the self-employed, and loans schemes have provided around £1.3 billion in cash for Scottish firms.

And help has also arrived through uplifts in Universal Credit (£119 million), statutory sick pay support (£77 million) and working tax credit uplifts (£28.6 million).

Shadow finance secretary Donald Cameron said the sheer scale of the support proved the UK's commitment to Scotland, and how all four nations benefit from the broad shoulders of the union.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Donald Cameron said:

"The level of financial support from the UK Government is astonishing and unprecedented.

"It proves how valuable this union of four nations is, and how we pull together in times of crisis.

"It also puts firmly to bed any suggestion that Westminster doesn't care about Scotland – this shows 10 billion reasons very much to the contrary.

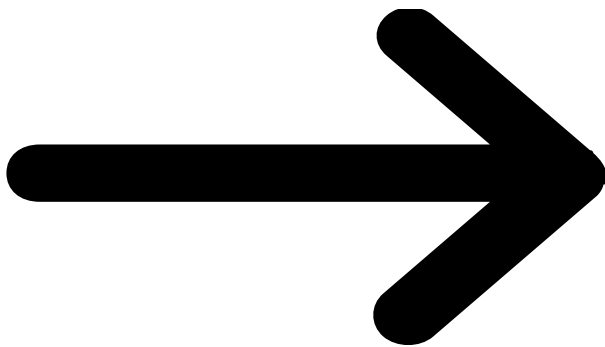
"This money isn't just being used to arm the health and care services with

what they need to fight coronavirus.

“It’s safeguarding hundreds of thousands of jobs, making sure our economy can return to strength, and protecting the most vulnerable in society.”

Sturgeon faces major questions on UK care homes claim

1 Jun 2020



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.

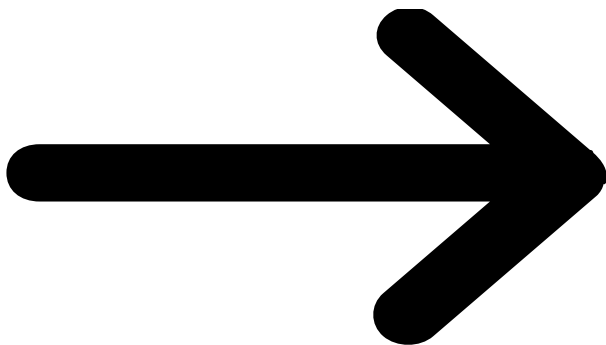
“She can no longer stand in front of the country and use this feeble excuse.

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

[SNP’s increased testing capacity means nothing unless properly used](#)

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26 May 2020



Nicola Sturgeon’s pledge on increased testing will be meaningless unless more capacity is used, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Analysis by the party has revealed that the combined daily tests rarely hit 50 per cent, with only 4742 being carried out on Sunday, well short of the 10,000 aim.

In fact, the Scottish Government has never met the 10,000-a-day target previously set out by the First Minister.

Yet she said today that by increasing that capacity to 15,000, more testing would be completed.

She also backed down on previous claims that 2000 contact tracers would be in place by the end of the month, instead saying only 700 were needed to launch the test, trace and isolate scheme.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Nicola Sturgeon could have as large a testing capacity as she likes – but it won’t matter a bit if people aren’t actually being tested.

“Every day the SNP government falls well short of the target to test 10,000 a day, and more often than not misses that target by half.

“That leaves thousands of care home residents, workers and their families untested, and that’s why we’re seeing such a crisis in these facilities.

“The SNP government just hasn’t done enough to get the tests out to those who need it most.

“Exiting lockdown will be dependent on this test, trace and isolate system, and we very much want that to succeed.

“But until the issue of testing is sorted, there is little hope that it will.”

[New policies unveiled to help schools through Coronavirus](#)

26 May 2020



The Scottish Conservatives have unveiled a raft of new policies for Scottish education which would help support parents, pupils and schools throughout the rest of the Covid-19 crisis and beyond.

The plan, “Helping Scottish Schools through the Coronavirus”, contains detailed proposals in five key areas which would bridge some worrying gaps that have come to light since schools closed two months ago in an effort to control the virus.

These new policies from the Scottish Conservatives focus on providing parity of learning provision for all pupils, reassurance for parents and aim to ensure that as far as possible, policies to improve Scottish education continue without interruption.

In recent weeks it has become clear that the Scottish Government has taken its eye off the ball with regards to education.

There appears to be no data on the IT capabilities of home learning pupils, we have seen worryingly low attendance of vulnerable children in educational “hubs” and the Scottish Government has delayed a vital review of the curriculum until after next year’s Holyrood election.

The Scottish Conservatives are therefore responding to these delays and oversights by presenting a constructive plan to help focus the minds of government on Scottish schools.

The Scottish Conservative plan calls for the Scottish Government to –

- Give equal access to technology for home schooling: the Scottish Government should be clearer about what kinds of ICT should be used to help poorer pupils.
- Help parents by giving them clear and regular evidence on why school closures continue to be necessary, a commitment to reopen schools at the earliest possible date – and childcare support ready for part-time schooling from August.
- Instruct the SQA to publish its method for changing teachers’ recommendations for grades, providing transparency for those whose grades are change.
- Continue to measure attainment properly, and stick to original plans to publish the OECD review into Curriculum for Excellence before the May 2021 election.
- Continue teacher recruitment, particularly in rural areas.

Jamie Greene, Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary said:

“The issue of childcare is the principle barrier for most working parents, so plans to continue school closures, even partially, must go in tandem with the provision of childcare.

“No one wants to jeopardise public health, but parents and children are desperate for schools to reopen.

“Families need help to manage this uncertainty; they need updated information about school closures and a reassurance that schools will reopen as soon as it is safe.

“Now more than ever the SNP can ill afford to take their foot off the pedal of vital education reform.

“The Covid-19 crisis has exposed some worrying gaps in Scottish education policy many of which have simply been exacerbated by the lockdown.

“We must start fixing some obvious problems now – we would ensure all children have access to good online resources, effective technology and force the SQA to explain grade changes.

“There is every reason to continue to recruit teachers and measure attainment so that we do not store up problems for the future.

“The Scottish Conservative plan would rebuild and reboot Scottish education

for these exceptional times.”