

# Jackson: Call in the Army to help with PPE delivery

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The Scottish Government should consider calling on the armed forces to ensure vital protective equipment is delivered to key health and care workers.

Nicola Sturgeon has admitted that while there are adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) in Scotland, there have been issues transporting them to the right places.

It has been reported that key workers have had to go without the crucial gear because some distribution centres were closed, and there are fears that could be repeated over the Easter Weekend.

Today, at a virtual First Minister's Questions session, Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said the SNP government should consider asking the Army to help.

The UK armed forces have already contributed to efforts to cope with the coronavirus pandemic, with a logistics team based at St Andrew's House.

Mr Carlaw also challenged the First Minister on the disparity in emergency support grants small and medium businesses are receiving in Scotland compared to elsewhere in the UK.

Firms are angry that the UK Government is paying a £25,000 grant per property, where-as the Scottish Government are releasing only £25,000 per business, irrespective of the number of premises.

It has been warned that will cost jobs and drive many businesses to the wall, and flies in the face of earlier pledges from the SNP that support packages here would match those from Westminster.

However, Ms Sturgeon refused to say she would change tack.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"We have some of the best armed forces in the world who are standing ready to help.

"If the Scottish Government is having difficulty in getting vital PPE to those who need it most, they must call on the army to help.

"It would be a perfectly acceptable solution in this unprecedented crisis, and would help protect our very brave health workers in hospitals, care homes and community settings.

"It was disappointing to hear Nicola Sturgeon say she won't be addressing disparity in support grants for businesses.

"Many have warned that only paying by business, rather than by property, is deeply unfair and will almost certainly cost jobs.

"It's blatantly wrong that businesses in England and Wales could be receiving several times the level of support than those here, all because the SNP wants to follow a different path."