

Lockdown exit will only succeed if SNP sorts out testing

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The SNP's route out of lockdown will only succeed if it sorts out problems with testing, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Nicola Sturgeon revealed the four-stage plan today, which will see restrictions gradually lifted from the end of next week.

However, the Scottish Conservatives have warned that every phase of that exit will be dependent on an adequate testing system being in place.

Since the outbreak, the Scottish Government has been severely criticised for not testing enough people, not using capacity properly, and not getting the tests out to the people who need them most.

And at the weekend, it was reported that not a single contact tracer had been recruited, despite promises to hire 2000 by the end of the month.

Those contact tracers will be key to the SNP's test, trace and isolate scheme which the lockdown exit relies upon.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"We all want to exit lockdown as soon and as safely as possible, for the sake of the economy and for the physical and mental health of the nation.

"And while many of the plans outlined today are welcome and give cause for optimism, they will only succeed if the SNP get testing absolutely right.

"Unfortunately, failings on testing so far have been the weakest aspect of this SNP government response to the coronavirus crisis.

"Tens of thousands of tests have gone unused and there have been major problems in getting tests to the vulnerable people who need them most, and those who work with them.

"And now we learn that the health secretary badly misled the public on the issue of elderly people being discharged from hospital to care homes without being tested for Covid-19.

"The SNP has to significantly up its game on coronavirus testing, otherwise every stage of this lockdown exit will be put in grave jeopardy."