

Sturgeon 'rowing back' on contact tracing target

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Nicola Sturgeon has been accused of “rowing back” on her contact tracing target, after suggesting today she wouldn’t need 2000 in place by the end of the month after all.

Speaking BBC Radio Scotland, the First Minister said it wasn’t necessary to have the full number “in the first stages” – which are due to begin next Monday.

That’s despite previously promising to have 2000 in place for the test, trace and isolate scheme to be up and running by June 1.

The system is essential for Scotland to move to the next phases of lifting lockdown.

However, the SNP’s approach to testing from the outset of the coronavirus crisis has been riddled with problems.

More than 100,000 tests have been left unused as the daily target falls short on a consistent basis, and care homes are still missing out, despite assurances they would all be given tests.

And today, a top academic has spoken out after his warnings to the SNP about Covid-19 in care homes were ignored.

Prof Richard Ennos, who wrote to health secretary Jeane Freeman at the beginning of the pandemic, said: “Discharging people from hospitals to care homes without testing was incredible.”

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

“Everyone desperately wants Scotland’s plan to exit lockdown quickly and safely to work.

“But it won’t happen unless the testing system is up to scratch.

“There’s no getting away from the fact Nicola Sturgeon said there would 2000 contact tracers recruited by the end of this month.

“Now she’s rowing back on that pledge significantly, and it sounds like she’s getting her excuses in early for having significantly fewer.

“The SNP’s approach to testing has been botched from the outset, and continued failure on this front will put lives at risk and lead to lockdown lasting longer than is necessary.”