



Jason Leitch apologises for saying older people are 'corralled' into care homes in Scotland

A senior figure in Scotland's care industry described Leitch's comments as 'outrageous'.

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The Scottish Government's top medical advisor has apologised after saying older people tended to be "corralled" in **care homes**.

Professor **Jason Leitch** was speaking on a live radio interview today about **the rising number** of positive tests for coronavirus north of the border and the potential impact on the social care sector.

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"Concerned in the sense I want to protect them as much as I can from this virus," he said.

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"We've learned both in Scotland and around the world, the vulnerable, who we tend to put in institutions such as care homes - remember, most older people live in their own homes - but we do corral older people in care homes.

"Donald Macaskill (CEO of Scottish Care) and many others have helped us with what protection looks like for those places.

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"I don't like it. I would rather have visiting, I'd have hairdressers visiting, and the all the usual things. We've had to effectively close them. It's horrible."

But those comments prompted an angry reaction from Annie Gunner Logan, the chief executive of CCPS, the Coalition of Care & Support Providers in Scotland.

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In a now deleted tweet, Logan said: "So apropos of care homes, Jason Leitch just said on BBC Scotland that we 'corral' older people into 'institutions'.

"I'm sorry, but that's an outrageous thing to say. No wonder social care isn't treated as a priority, when such a senior leader is so ill-informed."



Professor Jason Leitch apologised for his comments on care homes

Leitch responded: "Apologies Annie. That wasn't a well chosen word in a live interview but I did go on to say care homes were individual's homes."

"I'm sure if you listened to me throughout the hundreds of interviews I've done you realise I'm trying to protect those living and working in care homes."

The chief executive of Scottish Care - which represents independent care homes - had earlier warned the number of residents catching the virus is likely to grow in the coming weeks.

Dr Donald Macaskill told the BBC: "Unfortunately we have a likelihood that if we continue to see the transmission of the virus at the current rate, we will see an increase in case in care homes."

"We are in a very different position from where we were in March, but undeniably there is a close relationship between the number of cases in the community and the number of cases in care homes."

"England is further ahead, but we will get there unless we change our behaviour."

Scottish Labour health spokeswoman Monica Lennon said: "Professor Leitch has rightly apologised for his offensive remarks about people living in care homes and should take more care in future. The Scottish Government's pandemic response has had tragic consequences for care home residents and a public inquiry can't come soon enough."

"People living in care homes have had their human rights stripped away and have endured forced separation from family carers for several months."



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"It's caused a hidden catastrophe of mental and emotional distress for older and disabled people in care homes.

"This week family carers will be demonstrating at the Scottish Parliament for their loved ones to have their rights restored.

"Scottish Labour fully supports their campaign and is calling on SNP Ministers to expand routine testing and PPE access to the loved ones of care homes residents."

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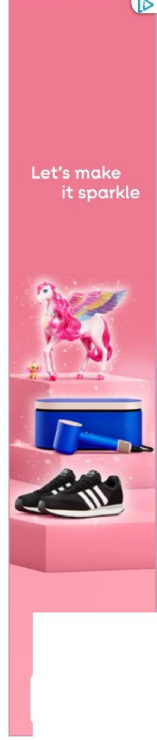


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