

# **Jason Leitch stepping down from post**

**The Scottish Government has announced on Tuesday that Professor Jason Leitch will leave his role as National Clinical Director at the end of April. Arrangements for his replacement in the post will be set out in due course.**

Professor Leitch said: "It has been an enormous privilege to carry out this role and work closely with colleagues across the health and care sector in service of the patients, their families and carers. The NHS and social care system does remarkable work every day, and I am immensely proud of the teams I have had the privilege of being part of.

"The ongoing success of the Scottish Patient Safety Programme is globally recognised and has significantly improved the safety and reliability of care in many ways. The Covid pandemic was an unprecedented challenge for all countries and I am proud of my colleagues inside and outside Government for their incredible work. It was a privilege to be able to communicate with the public so directly and be part of that co-ordinated response, and I will forever be grateful for the public's attention and willingness to follow the guidance – it saved lives. I have decided to look for new challenges across health and care after a break, and to spend more time with the charities I work with. I wish colleagues well for the future."

First Minister Humza Yousaf said: "Jason Leitch has made a fantastic contribution to the health of the nation, leading work to reduce hospital acquired infections and improve the quality of care in the NHS. The enduring success of the Scottish Patient Safety Programme is testament to his work. He played a huge role in helping me and fellow Ministers navigate the Covid pandemic by providing advice to help reach the best decisions, and by communicating so well with the public. I of course wish him every success in the future."

Scottish Conservative chairman Craig Hoy MSP said: "Jason Leitch's position became untenable when damning revelations about him were first revealed at the Covid inquiry.

"That exposed him less as an independent civil servant and more as a stooge for Sturgeon, Swinney and the SNP.

"His flippant remarks on WhatsApp message deletion being a pre-bed ritual caused Covid bereaved families great upset. They should have been enough for Humza Yousaf to sack him. But, with the First Minister too weak to act, Jason Leitch has belatedly done the right thing by resigning.

"The SNP must guarantee that the next person in this crucial public-facing role fully restores confidence among the public."

**Scottish Labour deputy leader Jackie Baillie said:** "I thank Jason Leitch for his service as National Clinical Director during some deeply difficult times and I look forward to welcoming the new National Clinical Director to the role in due course.

"Questions still persist over Jason Leitch's actions during the Covid-19 pandemic and regarding the ongoing fallout from the Eljamel scandal in NHS Tayside.

"Every effort must be made to ensure that the Scottish public get the answers that they deserve."



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UK Covid-19 Inquiry at EICC

Professor Jason Leitch, CBE.

Picture Alan Simpson