

# Coronavirus – emergency legislation for Scotland

The Scottish Parliament has backed measures contained in UK emergency legislation that will help strengthen Scotland's response to coronavirus (COVID-19).

The UK Coronavirus Bill, which was introduced to the House of Commons on 19 March, includes new reserved and devolved laws that will help to slow the spread of the virus.

New measures include:

- bringing more health professionals and social workers into the workforce
- relaxing regulations to ease the burden on frontline staff
- enhanced public health measures designed to contain the virus or slow its spread
- collecting necessary information to enable monitoring of disruption to food supply chains

The bill includes new powers that will enable authorities to cancel events and close premises, and to allow the police to compel potentially infectious people to undergo COVID-19 screening and assessment.

These new emergency powers cover a two-year period that can be extended if necessary and will only be used if required. The Scottish Government has confirmed that it will use powers within the Bill to ensure that action to implement social distancing and impose restrictions on gatherings, events and

operation of business activity can be enforced.

Constitution Secretary Michael Russell said: "This new emergency legislation will help to save lives as we face this unprecedented crisis." "It is only because of the extraordinary public health challenge confronting us, as a result of the global pandemic, that these measures have had to be considered."

"These are emergency powers that will be in force temporarily and only used if required." "I am grateful that The Scottish Parliament supported the bill and we are committed to reporting on how and when the emergency powers included in the Bill have been used."