

# Coronavirus – Government advice on mass gatherings

**Action is intended to support critical services.**

**Government guidance advising that gatherings of 500 people or more should not take place in Scotland has been published.**

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced the action last week to protect the resilience of public services – especially emergency services and the NHS – until the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has lessened substantially.

The guidance now asks organisers of all large events – indoors or outdoors – to cancel or postpone.

The Scottish Government does not have powers to cancel events, but encourages and advises organisers to act responsibly to support the efforts of emergency services and the wider public sector to prepare for increased numbers of cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus).

The guidance applies across the board to ensure clarity for event organisers. The First Minister said at the morning briefing that she did not rule out extending this guidance to smaller events too.

The First Minister said: “At a time when there is severe pressure on our fantastic emergency and public services as a result of the virus, it is only right that we seek to remove unnecessary burdens on frontline workers.

“By advising organisers not to hold large gatherings of 500 people or more in Scotland we are enabling services to

prioritise their resources to where they are needed most.

“This is just one of the ways that life will change in the coming weeks and months and while this will cause some disruption it will help us all to prepare for the virus and to protect ourselves and each other in the long run.

“As the amount of work required to fight COVID-19 increases over the next few days and weeks it is vital that people continue to follow the health advice such as handwashing and staying at home if you have any mild symptoms.”