

Coronavirus – from today's government briefing

Today there was still some fallout from the events of the weekend involving the former Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Dr Catherine Calderwood who resigned on Sunday night.

The First Minister introduced Dr Gregor Smith who was until today the Deputy CMO, and who is now the Temporary Acting CMO.

We were told that the recruitment process to appoint a permanent replacement will take place later, but Ms Sturgeon said that Dr Smith has been involved in the advice to the government all the way through, and is, certainly in the First Minister's view, a good temporary solution.

Some questions were aimed at trying to find out what the First Minister knew and when, and questioned her own judgement in not sacking the CMO 24 hours before the resignation was announced. These were refuted, but Ms Sturgeon did say that it became clear during Sunday that if the CMO stayed it was a risk to the government's message to the people of Scotland.

She explained that she had to balance that she wanted to have continuity of advice from the CMO who had been immersed in these matters since the beginning, with an acute understanding that it was important that the public have confidence in the message.

The First Minister also announced that two further deaths had occurred since yesterday. The way deaths are reported has

changed and will affect numbers reported in the next day or so.

The National Records of Scotland do not operate over the weekend and so the figures announced on Tuesday and Wednesday will perhaps appear higher as they will include the number of Covid-19 related deaths from the weekend. The First Minister is going to brief journalists tomorrow about the way this new system will work, so that there is real knowledge behind the reporting in papers and online.

The First Minister confirmed that she chairs a weekly sub-committee of the Cabinet to talk about the economic impact of the pandemic and that she reviews business support regularly. She said: "It will become more and more significant, but it is important that we do not come out of this lockdown prematurely."