

Think tank maps Scotland's at risk communities in advance of lockdown relaxation

A new think tank has published an interactive map of Scotland which shows the areas of the country which face the greatest and lowest risk of coronavirus transmission.

In the results [shown on this map here](#) Corstorphine/Murrayfield, Inverleith and Leith Walk council wards are shown red, and so are most at risk in Edinburgh, with Leith Walk taking 28th spot nationally.

A team of researchers and analysts at Scotianomics used a great deal of data to draw up the Covid-19 Community Risks Index, showing the most detailed possible picture of risk to Scottish communities.

The organisation has produced the colour-coded map based on council constituencies – [freely accessible online](#) – which it says should help guide Scottish Government policy on lifting lockdown restrictions on a phased, geographic basis. That could mean that schools or businesses across the country open earlier or later depending on the risk levels within individual communities.

Gordon MacIntyre-Kemp, founding director of Scotianomics in Glasgow, said: “The public and business reaction to coronavirus is highly-charged and often emotional. We believe this geographic breakdown can help the national response to provide clear analysis of existing data

“What is evident is that, for a wide variety of reasons, the risks vary hugely in different communities across Scotland. In terms of both the economy and health and well-being, we believe it makes sense to ease the lockdown according to those regional differences in risk.

“There has already been a great deal of debate on whether the four nations within the UK should ease restrictions in lockstep, despite the fact that Oban is likely to have a completely different risk profile to Tower Hamlets in London. What our research shows is that there are also significant variations even within Scotland.

“Across the world, other countries, including China, Italy and Germany, responded to the initial threat on a regionalised basis and are now lifting lockdown according to regional variations. Our research suggests this is the most likely way to prevent a second wave and to protect the economy.”

The research, led by senior researcher Samuel MacKinnon, was conducted during April and has already been submitted to the Scottish Government’s Advisory Group on Economic Recovery and the company says it has been welcomed by government ministers. However, it is now being made publicly accessible and Scotianomics has pledged that it will update the online tracker as new datasets become available.

Currently the research does **not** factor in actual infection rates or fatalities which may have been recorded in each area as these figures are not yet publicly available in sufficiently detailed format. Rather, it is based on existing data for Scotland’s 354 local authority wards and calculates each area’s risk of exposure according to two factors – transmission probability and potential for fatalities.

The data used in those calculations include population density, how many older people or those with underlying health

conditions live in the area, how many people use road and rail travel, how easy or otherwise it is to access local health services, and socio-economic factors, such as the average income of residents in each area.

Mr MacIntyre-Kemp added: “We want to be absolutely clear. This is nothing to do with the number of cases in an area or how well people living in each area have observed the lockdown. It is not a map of Covid-19 cases across Scotland but of the areas most at risk of community infection.

“However, what it sets out very clearly is that the risks of transmission and the likelihood of fatalities within particular communities can be predicted with a high degree of confidence.

“For example, our findings suggested that Inverclyde was the most at risk community in Scotland, taking up the top six spots on the index. That has been borne out by the actual impact of Covid-19 in the area.

“This clearly demonstrates the scope to consider issues such as schools reopening on Orkney to a different timescale to Greenock. We already have a weather warning system with yellow, amber or red alerts which are adapted to different parts of Scotland. Likewise, schools have different holidays in different council areas, all of which suggest that a phased reopening of Scotland, and indeed the rest of the UK, would not be that complex.

“It is our hope that this kind of fact-based, data-driven research will help shape the Scottish Government’s plans to get the best possible outcomes for both public health and the economy, by lifting lockdown according to the very different risks in different areas.”

Scotianomics was created at the start of 2020 to offer data-driven analysis and risk assessment of significant opportunities or threats to the Scottish economy, aimed at

business leaders, Government policy makers and other economic decision-makers.

The Covid-19 Risk Monitor can be viewed online [here](#)



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