

Coronavirus – FM addresses parliament on next steps in Phase 3 including reopening of schools

Many will be disappointed that the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has not yet announced the reopening of gyms and swimming pools, but she did announce to Holyrood today that those shielding may go out and about from Saturday 1 August 2020.

There was also a big announcement for school pupils who will return to education from 12 August, with the hope that all pupils will be at school full-time from 18 August.

The First Minister said there will be quick access to testing for all those who are symptomatic, and a targeted, enhanced surveillance programme to highlight any impact on pupils and staff.

Ms Sturgeon confirmed further spending by the Scottish Government to pay for more teachers to be recruited. In addition to the £45million already announced, there will be another £30 million for new teachers allowing enough to recruit up to 1400 new teachers. The government hopes this will address any learning loss through pupils having been out of school since March, and also ensure that even if there are teachers off sick, others can step in.

There is a a £50 million education recovery fund for local authorities. This will support cleaning, facilities management, school transport and other practical issues that are vital in ensuring a safe return to school.

Opening dates for gyms, pools and sports courts will be reviewed in three weeks time. The news you have all been waiting for – the dentist can now see you and use aerosol in urgent dental care if required. Optometrists can also begin to see patients in community practices and in their own homes from 3 August.



fbpic- First Minister Statement: COVID-19 Next Steps. Nicola Sturgeon MSP First Minister today announces changes to the Scottish government Covid-19 lockdown including the opening of schools Poolphoto/Fraser Bremner/Scottish Daily Mail Thursday 30 July 2020. Picture FRASER BREMNER

The First Minister said: “In many ways, Scotland is in a better position in relation to COVID than I would have dared hope a few weeks ago. But this position is fragile.

“If we are not careful now, then in two or three weeks we could easily be facing some of the issues here in Scotland that we are currently seeing around the world.

“The two changes I have announced – on schools and shielding – are very significant, and we need to see if there has been any impact from changes that have already taken place. It is important, in particular, that we allow the impact of re-opening our schools to be assessed before we proceed with further major changes.

“Caution remains essential. We want to open up society and the economy as soon as we safely can, but we do not want to have to re-impose restrictions. That start-stop pattern seen in other countries is potentially more harmful to the economy, and our health and wellbeing.

“Do not drop your guard now. Every single time one of us breaches the rules, we give the virus a chance to spread. If we allow complacency to creep in now, it will – without exaggeration – be deadly.”

Confirmed dates:

- Pause in shielding advice (1 August)
- Relax certain restrictions on some support groups and services and for sports coaches, following relevant guidance (3 August)
- Routine eye care services can be provided within community optometry practice and in patients' own homes (3 August)
- Children to be able to return to school full time (11 August. Some schools may operate a phased return with all children back by 18 August)
- Urgent dental care involving aerosols may begin in practice for NHS patients (17 August)

Indicative date: Monday 24 August

- Live outdoor events, with physical distancing, enhanced hygiene, restricted numbers and following guidance
- Organised outdoor contact sport for all ages, following guidance from relevant sports bodies
- Bingo halls, snooker/pool halls and indoor bowling, with physical distancing, enhanced hygiene and guidance
- Funfairs (static and travelling), following guidance
- Amusement arcades and casinos, with enhanced hygiene and following guidance
- Driving lessons can resume, following guidance

Indicative date: Monday 14

September

- Indoor gyms, swimming pools and sports courts, with physical distancing and enhanced hygiene (to be kept under review in case earlier date feasible)
- Soft play, with enhanced hygiene and following guidance
- Indoor live events, with physical distancing, restricted numbers and following guidance
- Theatres, live music/concert halls and other indoor entertainment venues, with physical distancing requirements and following This does not include nightclubs – engagement with the sector will take place ahead of the next review.
- Limited reopening of stadiums, following guidance and with options for testing on earlier dates where agreed with government.



fbpic- First Minister Statement: COVID-19 Next Steps. Nicola Sturgeon MSP First Minister today announces changes to the Scottish government Covid-19 lockdown including the opening of schools Poolphoto/Fraser Bremner/Scottish Daily Mail Thursday 30 July 2020. Picture FRASER BREMNER