

Coronavirus – First Minister's address

The First Minister addressed The Scottish Parliament this afternoon about the new measures being introduced in Scotland from tomorrow in an effort to suppress the spread of Covid-19.

Tonight she addressed the nation on TV.

This is the text of her address below.



The last six months have been unprecedented.

They've been the hardest many of us have ever lived through

But through our collective efforts across Scotland, we did beat Covid back.

As a result – although too much heartbreak has been endured and too many families are grieving – many lives were also saved.

But as we enter winter, and with many lockdown restrictions now thankfully lifted, the challenge is once again getting harder.

Albeit from the very low level we achieved in the summer, cases are rising again.

In the last three weeks, they have almost trebled.

And as the virus spreads, we see more people being admitted to hospital again and sadly dying.

So we are once again at a tipping point

We must act to get Covid back under control.

And protect the things that matter most to us.

In a global pandemic of a virus with as yet no vaccine, we simply can't have 100% normality. No country can.

So we must choose our priorities.

Our priorities are saving lives and protecting health.

Keeping schools open.

Restarting NHS services.

Ensuring care homes are safe.

And protecting jobs and livelihoods.

It is to safeguard these priorities that I must ask all of you again to make sacrifices.

Sacrifices for our national well-being.

They are not easy but please believe me when I say they are essential.

We have decided that from Friday there will be a national curfew for pubs, bars and restaurants. They will have to close by 10pm – to reduce the time people spend there.

And from tomorrow, we are all being asked not to visit each other's homes – because we know that is often how the virus spreads most easily from one household to another.

There are exceptions – for care of the vulnerable, extended households, childcare and tradespeople.

But generally, by staying out of other people's houses for now, we give ourselves the best chance of bringing Covid back under control.

We can still meet outdoors with one other household in groups of up to 6 people

And because we know this is especially difficult for children and young people we've tried to build in more flexibility for you.

If you are younger than 12, there are no limits on playing with your friends outdoors.

And if you are between 12 and 17 you can meet your friends outdoors in groups of 6 – but you don't all have to be from just two households.

Now, for everyone – adults and children – I know that today must feel like a step backwards.

But please know that thanks to all your efforts over the last six months, we are in a much stronger position than in the spring.

Cases are rising but less rapidly than back then.

Our Test & Protect system is working well – tracing contacts and breaking chains of transmission.

We have much more information on how and where the virus spreads.

And we know what we need to do to protect ourselves and others.

And all of us have a part to play.

So I am asking everyone – please, follow the new rules. They will make a difference.

If you can and haven't already, please also go to protect.scot and download the Protect Scotland app – so more people who might be at risk of the virus can be traced quickly and asked to self-isolate.

And remember FACTS – face coverings, avoid crowded areas; clean your hands and surfaces; keep two metre distancing; and self-isolate and get tested if you have symptoms.

Finally, I know that all of this has been incredibly tough – and six months on it only gets tougher.

But never forget that humanity has come through even bigger challenges than this one.

And though it doesn't feel like it now, this virus will pass.

It won't last forever and one day, hopefully soon, we will be looking back on it, not living through it.

So though we are all struggling with this – and believe me, we are all struggling – let's pull together.

Let's keep going, try to keep smiling, keep hoping and keep looking out for each other.

Be strong, be kind and let's continue to act out of love and solidarity.

I will never find the words to thank all of you enough for the enormous sacrifices you have made so far.

And I am sorry to be asking for more.

But a belief I hold on to – and one I am asking you to keep faith with in those moments when it all feels too hard – is this.

If we stick with it – and, above all, if we stick together – we will get through it.

