

# Coronavirus – Reaction to new restrictions

**The new restrictions announced today by the First Minister have met with some comment as you might imagine.**

After the announcement of over 1,000 new cases today the government has acted to stop the spread of the virus.

**The new measures are:**

**In the Central belt area focusing on five health board areas (Ayrshire & Arran; Forth Valley; Greater Glasgow & Clyde; Lanarkshire; Lothian):**

- All licensed premises will be required to close, with the exception of takeaway services
- Cafés (unlicensed premises) which don't have an alcohol licence will be able to open between 6am and 6pm
- Takeaways (including from pubs and restaurants) can continue
- Evening meals may be served in accommodation for residents only but no alcohol can be served
- Specific life events, such as weddings and funerals, may continue with alcohol, with current meeting rules for these events (20 person limit in regulated premises only)
- No group exercise classes for indoor gyms and sports courts, pools with an exemption for under 18s
- No adult (18+) contact sports or training, except professional sports, indoor or outdoor
- No outdoor live events

- Snooker/pool halls, indoor bowling, casinos and bingo halls are to close
- Public transport use should be minimised as much as possible, such as for education and work, where it cannot be done from home
- Current meeting rules, maximum of six people from two households, continue to apply

**Nationwide (excepting central belt areas):**

- Hospitality (food and drink): all premises may only open indoors between 6am and 6pm, with no sales of alcohol
- Hospitality (food and drink): premises may open outdoors until 10pm, with sales of alcohol (where licensed)
- Takeaways (including from pubs and restaurants) can continue
- Evening meals may be served in accommodation for residents only but no alcohol can be served
- Current meeting rules, maximum of six people from two households, continue to apply
- Specific life events, such as weddings and funerals, may continue with alcohol being served, with current meeting rules for these events (20 person limit in regulated premises only)

**Cllr Norman Work Convener of the Licensing Board**, said: “We appreciate that this will be disappointing and difficult for those running businesses as well as their customers but the new restrictions will help to keep everyone safe. Up until now the hospitality sector has been very compliant with changes being made due to the coronavirus pandemic and we expect that to continue.”

## **SCOTTISH CONSERVATIVES**

The Scottish Conservatives say the First Minister said that funding would be made available, but failed to provide any details of how much businesses can apply for, when they can

apply or how long the money will take to reach them.

Holyrood leader Ruth Davidson, said: "Our hospitality sector has complied with everything that has been asked of them.

"But many of these small businesses are now running on empty and all reserves are gone.

"Nicola Sturgeon has been warning of the potential of a second wave or possible regional lockdown measures for weeks.

"We know there were problems in businesses accessing support after the local lockdown in Aberdeen.

"A discussion about how to compensate businesses that might be affected by any new measures should have taken place weeks ago.

"A one-day consultation after today's announcement – and just hours before businesses are forced to close their doors – is just not good enough.

"These businesses deserve better.

"They need to know how much they can apply for, when they can apply for it and how long they will have to wait before support reaches them.

"Those answers could have been provided today, but Nicola Sturgeon failed to do that."

## **LABOUR**

Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard said: "The Scottish hospitality sector is not Sodom and Gomorrah and should not be treated as such.

"Why doesn't the First Minister consider closing down those businesses which are not complying with guidance, instead of shutting down every single business, serving 70 per cent of

the population, including those which are fully complying?

“Where is the evidence that Covid is spreading in all hospitality settings to warrant a blanket ban on all of these establishments?

“Can the First Minister explain the terms of the review after the initial sixteen days?

“And can the First Minister outline how the £40 million mitigation the Government is proposing for those hospitality businesses forced to shut down will be distributed?

“If she’s going to have a consultation, will she speak to the trade unions?

“And will she take into account that every single worker, as well as every single business, should be covered for all of their losses – including those young workers, many of whom are on minimum hours or zero hours contracts?”

Shadow Scottish Secretary Ian Murray said: “It should never have come to this.

“Under the SNP Government’s watch, Scotland now has the highest R rate in the UK following a complete failure to tackle the spread of the virus.

“The SNP took too long to set up Test and Protect and ignored warnings about the return of students to university.

“Businesses and livelihoods are now at risk as a result of the SNP’s incompetence.

“While public health is the priority, people’s jobs must now be protected and there is an urgent need for both the UK and Scottish governments to put their differences aside and work together on the economic impact.”

## **Liberal Democrats**

Scottish Leader of Liberal Democrats, Willie Rennie, said: “These complex set of measures are being rushed through at

break neck speed and look more like a panicked knee jerk reaction than a considered, debated and agreed strategy.

“People’s sacrifices earlier this year were made on the promise of elimination of the virus. This new set of restrictions, implemented earlier than elsewhere, shows that the elimination strategy has not been a success.

“We need a new route map which everyone can understand, agreed by Parliament so that the country can see the evidence, test the assumptions and question the experts.

“The lack of advance debate and scrutiny of these measures must not be repeated for the next phase.”

## **CHRISTINE JARDINE MP**

Edinburgh West MP Christine Jardine, has called for businesses to be given clear advice and the UK Government to think again about extending the Job Retention scheme following the First Minister’s announcement today.

Ms Jardine, who is also her party economy spokesperson said: “I’m disappointed and depressed for everyone in Edinburgh West, and across Lothian, whose personal and professional life is now going to be impacted again.

“But I would urge everyone to work with these new restrictions to help to stop the spread of the virus.

“Bringing in these new restrictions does make me question whether the Scottish Government has done enough since summer to prepare for the second wave we all knew was coming, and reinforces the Liberal Democrat argument that we need the UK Government to extend the Job Retention Scheme.

“Many of the businesses who will be most affected by these steps have already adapted to cope with the crisis, they need clarity from both our Governments and economic support to

ensure they can protect their employees.

“I would call on Rishi Sunak to rethink his strategy and extend Furlough to June of next year to protect the livelihoods of thousands of people in my constituency.”

## **SCOTTISH GREENS**

Scottish Green co-leader Patrick Harvie said: “With over a thousand new cases identified in Scotland in the last day, there is a clear need for new measures from government. But any restrictions placed on the public is a contract.

“Anyone asked to live with these new rules wants to see that the government is doing everything it can to control the spread of the virus, so that the restrictions don’t have to last longer than necessary. That means the review of testing cannot come quickly enough. Many more people need to be getting tested, especially weekly tests for those on the front line. Access to testing should be easy, not chaotic.

“And with the UK Government limiting the financial support of its job retention scheme, additional funding from the Scottish Government needs to get to where it is needed as quickly as possible. That is, it must be guaranteed to reach those hospitality workers whose jobs are on the line.

“The additional restrictions in the central belt could have unforeseen consequences if it encourages people to travel out of the region to places where they have better access to pubs and restaurants. The First Minister advises people not to use public transport but for some, an open pub will be a short drive away. This presents a serious risk.”

## **INDUSTRY RESPONSE**

**Food and Drink Federation** (FDF) Scotland’s Chief Executive Officer, David Thomson, said: “We are extremely disappointed

to see the additional restrictions on Scotland's fragile hospitality and food service sector, which will of course have a knock-on impact on our food and drink suppliers.

"Food and drink producers supplying hospitality need certainty and good news during these difficult times.

"We urge the Scottish Government to work with the UK Government to ensure hospitality businesses and the food and drink companies that supply them are supported to survive and thrive during these challenging times.

"This will allow the hospitality sector and their suppliers to play their part in Scotland's economic recovery and the creation of more jobs long-term."

Stephen Montgomery, spokesperson for the **Scottish Hospitality Group**, said: "The First Minister has effectively signed a death sentence for many businesses across the Scottish hospitality industry, while the real problem is socialising at home. We have repeatedly implemented the safety measures required by Government and more to protect our customers and staff. We are part of the solution to combat this virus not part of the problem.

"This latest blow from the Scottish Government will create fear and anger across our industry. This is not a "short, sharp shock", rather a crippling stranglehold that will result in many Scottish pubs and restaurants unable to reopen in lockdown areas if this becomes indefinite. While some premises may remain open, banning alcohol indoors will mean that many smaller businesses, family operated and at the heart of local Scottish communities, will not survive past winter and the longer-term impact will be felt for years to come.

"We have repeatedly asked for scientific data from the Scottish Government to validate these escalating restrictions and yet we have been singled out, charged and found guilty without any supporting evidence. Similarly, there is no

evidence that alcohol is a transmitter of coronavirus, yet people can eat out in a restaurant but will now be refused the choice of a glass of wine with their meal. We understand that restrictions have to be put in place but decisions must be based on evidence, anything else is disproportionate and unfair.

“We have warned the Government that this approach is catastrophic for an industry which is vital to the fight against Covid-19. As well as the public health risks of shutting down the Scottish hospitality sector, the economic cost will be catastrophic for an industry worth £10.6 billion to the Scottish economy annually and which employs 285,000 people, many of whom are young Scots under 25. Countless jobs will be lost forever if businesses which are already on their knees are forced to close.

“If the hospitality sector is being singled out for specific restrictions then it is only fair that the Government provides sector specific financial compensation and while welcome in principle the £40million funding announced by the Scottish Government, we will need to see more detail on how this will actually work for our sector.”

## **CAMRA**

**CAMRA's** Director for Scotland Joe Crawford said: “The First Minister’s announcement banning the serving of alcohol indoors for 16 days across the country – and forcing pubs in five health board areas in the central belt to close altogether – is absolutely devastating news for pubs and breweries.

“Publicans who have been operating at reduced rates, and who have already invested thousands of pounds of their dwindling reserves making their premises COVID-secure, now face 16 days without any turnover whatsoever. Understandably, they feel like pubs have become the scapegoat for the pandemic.

“The £40 million in support for the hospitality sector is welcome and necessary but the devil will be in the detail. Without proper financial compensation now – and longer-term financial support to help deal with reduced trade as a result of restrictions like the curfew – we risk seeing thousands of pubs, clubs and breweries closing for good before Christmas.”