

Council will support local businesses when Level Three begins on Monday

Earlier today the First Minister confirmed changes to lockdown restrictions in Edinburgh under Scotland's new five-tier approach.

Following recommendations from public health officials, Nicola Sturgeon confirmed in an update to The Scottish Parliament just ahead of First Minister's Questions that Edinburgh will move to level three of the Scottish Government's Covid-19 restrictions framework, effective from 6am on Monday, 2 November 2020.

Areas placed into level three are described as those which have an increased incidence of the virus, with multiple clusters and increased community transmission. The graduated series of protective measures are designed to tackle the virus in indoor settings and allow for a change in hospitality opening hours across the city while ensuring that schools can stay open and that council services will continue in full.

The [level three guidance](#) includes:

- No in-home socialising
- Up to six people from two households can socialise outdoors or in hospitality establishments
- Hospitality establishments are not permitted to sell alcohol indoors or out, but can supply food for consumption on premise within certain times
- Accommodation is open and follows the same rules as

hospitality

- Essential (e.g. work-related) use of accommodation can continue
- Local tourism is encouraged within the local authority area only
- No non-essential travel into or out of the level three area
- There are travel exemptions for essential travel for work, education, essential shopping, health reasons, outdoor exercise, weddings and funerals and transit through restricted areas
- International quarantine regulations continue to apply at all levels

Council officers will now work with government and businesses as these changes are introduced and the guidance and level will be reviewed weekly. There is potential for measures to be eased if the capital's Covid-19 cases continue to decline.



Council Leader Adam McVey

Responding to today's announcement Council Leader Adam McVey said: "There's no getting away from how difficult the current situation is for our local businesses and the First Minister's update will hopefully have brought some encouragement to the hospitality sector in Edinburgh. Local bars and restaurants will now be able to re-open from next week – albeit without alcohol sales and with restricted hours, which everyone accepts will be challenging.

"We want to help businesses do this quickly and safely and our teams will continue to support them by providing help and advice on how to comply with the guidance, and will continue to engage daily with The Scottish Government to get any additional clarity required. Along with many others, I'm encouraged that our schools can remain open and that funding support for businesses is set to continue as long as the

restrictions remain in place, although of course we would like to see restrictions eased even further to the benefit of our local communities and economies.

“Thanks to everyone following the guidance, Edinburgh’s cases are on a downward trend but we’ve got to make further progress before restrictions can be relaxed further so it’s crucial that we keep following the public health advice. Continuing to follow the rules and limit the spread of the virus is the only way we’ll be able to steer our city towards a lower level of restrictions and I’m confident we’ll do this by working together.”



Councillor Cammy Day. Photo: Martin P. McAdam
www.martinmcadam.com

Cammy Day, Depute Leader, reflected the views shared on Twitter of some of his Labour Party colleagues when he added: “Thanks to residents and businesses being careful and adhering to all of the restrictions, I’m pleased to see that Edinburgh’s case numbers are finally dropping. Clearly we still have some way to go and we need to keep up the good work, but we also want to see as many businesses as possible get back up and running.

“While of course we accept professional and public health guidance, I hope that The Scottish Government will release more information as to the justification of these measures and the support available for affected businesses as soon as possible.

“In light of the discussions we’ll also need to review our plans for re-opening many of our buildings and the timings we had outlined for this, and hope to confirm next steps as soon as we can.”

Local MSP Daniel Johnson has called this evening for an explanation of the decision to place Edinburgh in such a high category when he says that the indicators point to the more

correct assessment of Level 2. He has written to the Director of Public Health asking for an urgent briefing for all elected representatives in Edinburgh. This would include all 62 councillors, one of whom, Cllr Iain Whyte is the leader of the Conservative Group. He has replied to Mr Johnson saying that he is happy to be involved and agrees that 'these decisions should be clear and based on a rational system.

For more information on the Scottish Government's COVID-19 Framework or on the guidance currently in place, visit <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/>