

Coronavirus – Edinburgh resists ongoing government restrictions

**Edinburgh remains in Level Three of
the Scottish Government
restrictions, and it has been for
the last three weeks or so.**

It was the subject of wide speculation that the capital would move up to Level Two of the restrictions which would allow restaurants and other businesses in the city to open longer, and perhaps make at least some of the income they might have otherwise expected.

Following the announcement by the First Minister on Tuesday at the weekly review there has been an amount of comment on whether Edinburgh should remain in Level Three or not.

This discussion includes an emergency motion to today's council meeting which will be discussed by councillors this afternoon.

And the Council Leader, Cllr Adam McVey reported that he spoke to the Deputy First Minister John Swinney earlier in the week to put Edinburgh's case forward. He received a letter in response after that call:



You can watch the [council meeting online here](#).

COUNCIL EMERGENCY MOTION :

Council commends residents and businesses (including the hospitality sector) who, through their hard work and adherence to guidance have driven Edinburgh's COVID transmission case numbers to within level 2 rates- along with all other indicators of the framework.

Council notes that the Leader and Chief Executive have met with public health officials and The Deputy First Minister weekly and have consistently made Edinburgh's case for the least restrictive level, within the context of public health's recommendations – putting the protection of residents as the first priority.

Further notes following regular engagement with businesses and trade bodies in the City, the Leader has also made the case for changes to support the specific circumstances of Edinburgh's businesses, wider society and economy.

Council seriously regrets that despite robust representations from Edinburgh Council to the Cabinet and public health advice supporting a case to reduce Edinburgh's level of restrictions to level 2, this has not happened.

Council notes a letter from the Scottish Government, requested by the Council Leader, giving an explanation of the Cabinet's decision will be published on the Council's website and emailed to members when received.

Council agrees to continue to lobby the Scottish Government and at next scheduled meeting insist the government follow scientific evidence and advice that indicates that Edinburgh have been consistently in Tier 2.

Council also agrees, if the recommendation is to keep Edinburgh in level 3, approach the Scottish Government and requests they allocate an appropriate level of funding to help

deal with the unique circumstances facing the Edinburgh economy which will to help protect as many jobs as possible.

Council Leader Adam McVey said: "I'm extremely disappointed. Our numbers are stable and have now been consistently within the rates of level two for some time. We know what a dire situation local businesses continue to face and the latest news will be yet another blow in the lead-up to the Christmas period – which should be their busiest time of the year. I've been strongly pressing for Edinburgh's case to move to a lower level of restrictions when safe to do so. The data suggest that time should have been now.

"It's thanks to everyone following the guidance that our numbers have fallen and it's why the Capital's expectation was rightly that we would be moving to level two. I've asked to meet the Government as a matter of urgency to ensure they give a full explanation to the people of Edinburgh of the public health advice that they have based their decision on. I'll also be pressing the case for additional financial support for our businesses who will need additional help following this decision.

"Despite this situation we need to continue to do everything we can over the coming week to continue to make progress – that means following the guidance, maintaining social distancing and washing hands and using sanitiser regularly."

Depute Leader Cammy Day said: "This is an outrage and slap in the face for the many businesses, individuals and families who have so carefully stuck to restrictions over the winter so far, suffering significant losses and missing out on seeing one another over the festive period.

"It's down to them that our cases per 100,000 are lower than many areas around the country, including some already in level two, so we completely understand those who are questioning today's decision to retain the current restrictions in

Edinburgh. We will continue to do everything in our power to ensure this is recognised by the Scottish Government, and will be calling for them to reconsider and reverse their decision!"