Coronavirus – today's figures

The figures for today have a caveat on them as the increased number of the new cases reported in the last few days may have been affected by backlog issues at UK Government labs over the weekend.

The First Minister will update parliament at 2.05pm this afternoon.

At the weekend the First Minister announced that all of Scotland will go into Level Four restrictions from midnight on Boxing Day morning. You can see all the details of these below.

The latest figures detailing the number of people diagnosed with Covid-19 in the last 24 hours in Scotland have been announced.

The figures in Scotland as at 22 December 2020 are as follows:

1,316 new cases of Covid-19 reported which equates to
 7.5% of those newly tested (but there is an advisory on these numbers as there may have been a backlog in processing data from the UK Lighthouse system) 19,547 new tests for Covid-19 reported results

- The number of positive cases is now 114,366
- 43 newly reported deaths have been announced today of people who have tested positive within the last 28 days
- 60 people were in intensive care yesterday with recently confirmed Covid-19
- 1,045 people were in hospital yesterday with recently confirmed Covid-19
- The number of deaths under this daily measurement is now
 4,326

As at **13 December 2020**, a total of **6,092** deaths have been registered in Scotland where Covid-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, according to statistics published by National Records of Scotland (NRS) on Wednesday This figure is calculated on a wider definition of deaths relating to Covid-19 than the daily figure reported by The Scottish Government.

You can also see the latest numbers laid out visually on the Travelling Tabby website <u>here</u>. It is updated at 3pm daily.

[su_spoiler class="my-custom-spoiler" title="First Minister's speech 19 December 2020"] As you can imagine, the fact that I am speaking to you at 5pm on the Saturday before Christmas — having just chaired an emergency meeting of my Cabinet and spoken to the leaders of the opposition parties — suggests a serious situation, and one that requires action to be taken.

The information I have received about the new variant of the virus suggest to me that we do face a serious situation right now. It is probably the most serious – and potentially dangerous – juncture we have faced since March.

But if we act now, we can prevent that serious situation materialising.

I want to set out clearly today what - for Scotland - the

situation is;

I will set out why in light of that I consider very firm preventative action to be necessary;

And I will outline the further action that the Cabinet has this afternoon agreed to take.

As I set out in Parliament earlier this week, Covid cases in Scotland had been falling in recent weeks — as a result of the tough restrictions in place — but in the most recent week had started rising again in parts of the country.

As a result, a number of local authorities were put into tighter level 3 restrictions and a number of others required to stay there.

However, it is also the case that the situation in Scotland – right now – is not as severe as it is in other parts of the UK.

Cases per 100,000 of the population in Scotland are around half the number in England and around a third of the number in Wales.

And our statistics today — 572 new cases, representing 4% of all tests carried out yesterday — suggests a broadly stable position.

So all things being equal — while we had no room for complacency — we had hoped we might get through the next few weeks, at least in many parts of the country, without significantly more severe restrictions being necessary.

Unfortunately, as is so often the case with this virus, all things are not proven to be equal.

Last week, it was confirmed that a new variant of the virus had been identified in the UK, and I advised Parliament that a small number of cases of it had already been identified in Scotland.

Over last night and today, the governments of the four nations across the UK have received further scientific briefing on the impact of the new strain.

The UK Chief Scientific Adviser updated a 4 nations meeting that I participated in this morning and the CMO has updated cabinet this afternoon.

Firstly, it is important for me to be clear that – at this stage – there is no evidence to suggest that this new strain of the virus causes more severe illness.

And there is no evidence at this stage to suggest that new strain will affect the effectiveness of the vaccines that are being developed or the vaccine that is being used in Scotland.

All of that is reassuring.

However, there is now strong evidence that the new strain is spreading substantially more quickly than other strains we have been dealing with up to now.

Indeed, it is believed that it this faster transmission that may be driving the rapidly deteriorating situation in the south of England, including London, and in Wales – where cases are rising quickly and hospitals are under very severe and growing pressure.

We do not know how quickly the new strain of the virus is circulating widely in Scotland.

The latest information is that 17 cases have been identified in Scotland through genomic sequencing — but we need to be realistic that is likely to be an understatement of its true prevalence.

That means this strain is present here and that poses a real risk.

While further analysis is required to establish this one way or another, we already have a concern that this strain may be driving what appears to be faster transmission of COVID in some hospitals and care homes.

So given that this strain is circulating we know widely in some parts of the UK and given that we know it is already seeded in Scotland and is already circulating albeit at a lower level in Scotland, the bottom line is this – if we don't act firmly and decisively now to stop it, it will take hold here.

And if that happens, the very serious and rapidly worsening situation we see unfolding now in Wales, London and the south east of England will develop here too.

And that would mean many more people getting COVID in the weeks ahead and by January, our NHS being potentially overwhelmed and many more people dying which we have managed to avoid at every stage of this pandemic. And that would mean many more people dying from this virus.

To those who say this action is not justified because our current case levels are relatively low, I would say this.

4 weeks ago, London's cases were very low too — and now they are running out of control.

That is what we face is we do nothing, or do too little.

So is why cabinet has decided that further action is necessary. And that it needs to be firm.

It is true that this action is not solely in response to the severity of our current situation, nor even a worry about greater interaction over Christmas period in and of itself.

It is very firmly, action designed to prevent things getting worse — potentially very quickly — as a result of this new strain.

I know that accepting greater restrictions on this basis – not as a result of what is happening now, but to stop the situation deteriorating – is hard for people to accept. I really understand that.

But the most important thing we have learned through this pandemic is that failing to act quickly, decisively and preventatively in the face of this virus is always a mistake.

If I could have my time over again, I would act more quickly in February and early March. It is important that we do take the warning we are being given now very seriously and make sure our actions are appropriate in the face of that,

My judgment is that if we do nothing now or do too little – knowing what we now know about this new strain – things will get worse, and be much worse than they need to be.

But if we act now, we have a chance of keeping this situation under control while the vaccination programme continues to makes progress and get case numbers back to very low levels again.

That's why we have decided to act and to act firmly.

The action we propose is designed to do two things. And both of these things are important.

First, to prevent more of this new strain entering Scotland, from parts of the UK where it is already circulating widely.

And, second, given that we know this strain is already present in Scotland – albeit we think in lower numbers right now – this action is designed to reduce the risk of it spreading any further here.

Let me turn now to what Cabinet has decided.

Firstly, we are asking everyone to redouble your personal efforts in sticking to the rules and following FACTS. That may

sound obvious but it is really important.

That means staying out of each other's houses. It means abiding by travel restrictions, it means keeping a safe distance from people in other households and it means following all the hygiene advice really strictly.

If you have been letting your guard stop, which given what we have all lived under might be understandable, please lift it again.

Secondly, in order to reduce the risk of more of this strain being imported into Scotland, we intend to maintain a strict travel ban between Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Unfortunately and I am genuinely sorry about this, that will remain in place throughout the festive period. We simply cannot risk more of this strain entering the country if we can possible avoid it.

That means people from Scotland not visiting other parts of the UK and vice versa. Cross border travel for all but the most essential purposes is not permitted.

We are also asking Police Scotland and transport operators to consider how the enforcement of this can be strengthened in the period ahead. Though of course how that is done is an operational matter for the Chief Constable.

We will also be reviewing, urgently over the next day or so, the position on international travel and I will update on that early next week.

In the meantime, my strong advice continues to be against nonessential foreign travel.

Thirdly, we have already advised that where possible people should celebrate Christmas at home in their own household and meet with others outdoors only. The five day flexibility from the 23rd to 27th December was planned to recognise the impact of loneliness and the difficulty I know we all feel in leaving loved ones alone over Christmas.

However, earlier this week we advised that people should meet indoors with other households - if at all - on no more than one day over the five day period.

Given the concern we now have about this new strain, we now intend to change the law to allow indoor mixing in a bubble on Christmas Day only. From a minute past midnight on Christmas day to a minute past midnight on Boxing Day.

In large parts of England, as the Prime Minister has just announced, that will not be allowed. We will allow Christmas Day to go ahead but, as we have said from the start, only use this flexibility if you really, truly need to.

This new strain makes that message all the more important.

Our advice is still not to meet indoors, even on Christmas day, at all if you can possibly avoid it.

And, if you had people travelling to join you for Christmas from anywhere else in the UK that will no longer be permitted.

Equally, it will no longer be permitted for any of us to travel to anywhere in the UK for Christmas – we simply cannot take the risk of this strain traveling to different parts of the UK.

If you do decide to travel within Scotland, that will be allowed, but only on Christmas Day.

If you cannot make it there and back in the same day, please don't go.

And we are asking you not to do even that unless there is genuinely no alternative.

Finally, on Christmas Day the household limits will still apply as we had set out for the five day period: a maximum of 8 people from 3 households will be the law. But our advice will be to minimise those numbers as far as possible.

Standing here saying this makes me want to cry. As I'm sure listening to it will make you want to cry because I know how harsh this sounds.

I know how unfair it is.

But the virus is unfair.

It does not care about Christmas.

It does not care about anything other than spreading itself as far and wide as possible.

And it just became unfortunately a lot better at doing that.

If you have caring responsibilities, you can, as has always been the case, still visit someone else and travel to do that if it is essential to do so in order to provide care or assistance to a vulnerable person.

For everyone else, my message is stay home, stay safe and enjoy Christmas. That is in your own interest and the interest of everybody you love.

Beyond Christmas, because of the new virus strain, we need to make some changes.

This is my fourth point.

To limit as far as we can the risk of this strain spreading further than it has within Scotland, we intend to apply level 4 measures to all of mainland Scotland for a period of three weeks from one minute after midnight on Boxing Day morning.

The exceptions to that will be Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, and the other island communities where we have

reduced restrictions in recent weeks, these areas will go into level 3 but with strict restrictions on who can travel to and from them.

All these levels will be reviewed after two weeks.

To be clear, that means that from Boxing Day morning, nonessential shops will close, as will pubs, cafes and restaurants. Takeaway food will continue to be allowed.

Finally, since the summer, we have been determined to keep schools open. That remains our determination as far as we possibly can.

We have asked people to bear a greater burden of restrictions so that we could afford to keep pupils in our classrooms.

The situation of the new strain though means that until we are sure it is firmly under control – until we are sure we are not facing the same situation as the south of England or Wales – we must slightly change our plans for how schools operate after the Christmas period.

Schools still open next week will close on schedule as previously planned — we are not changing that.

They were then due to reopen from the 5th of January with all councils areas back by the 7th.

Instead of that, here is what we are now going to do -

For the children of key workers — such as nurses in our hospitals — schools will open as previously scheduled. They will also open as normal for the most vulnerable children.

All teachers will also return to work as scheduled and as planned.

For the majority of pupils, however, the holiday period is being extended until 11th January.

Starting on that date, learning will be online until at least 18th January.

After that, assuming we are confident we have the virus under control we will aim to reopen schools fully but at least until the 18 January, schools will go online only other than for the children of key workers and the most vulnerable.

Thank you for bearing with me. I am going to ask the Chief Medical Officer and the National Clinical Director to say a word or two after me.

I have taken a bit of time to set all of this out because I know how difficult this is and that is where I want to conclude.

I know this is difficult because it is Christmas and I know it is difficult because it is involving greater restrictions for a period after Christmas. And I know it is also difficult because I know that right now our case numbers look as if they are not as bad as elsewhere.

And therefore I understand people will be thinking is this necessary.

Please believe me when I tell you, with every fibre of my being, I would not be standing here on Saturday before Christmas announcing this if I did not think this was necessary.

I have spent, as many of you have, many anxious and worried days over the course of the past ten months. But I have rarely felt more worried since much earlier in the year as I have today. If we don't act now firmly and decisively this new strain is transmitting so quickly that it will very quickly overwhelm us.

I want to do everything I can to reduce that possibility and that is why these very difficult but very necessary measures

are being outlined today.

I briefed the leaders of the opposition parties earlier on. I will set out to parliament, as and when the Presiding Officer thinks that is necessary. But I didn't want to leave any time before setting out to you the public what these plans are – particularly given the proximity to Christmas.

I know how difficult a Christmas this was always going to be but now in particular it will be even more difficult.

I am genuinely sorry about that but we must take care, collectively, to stop this virus overwhelming us to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe and stop people dying unnecessarily.

Therefore I ask you to bear with us as we try to navigate our way through this next difficult stage of this pandemic.

My final point is this — I've said a couple of times in recent weeks that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. There is a light, it has not gone out.

The vaccination programme will pick up pace as we go into January but I've also said there will be times because we are still in this pandemic when the light will be difficult to see.

That's the stage we are at right now. We can't see the light at the moment because of this difficult phase but it hasn't gone out. It is still there. We do have brighter times ahead but in order to get us safely as possible to those brighter times I need to ask you for more sacrifices for a period.

Thank you.

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[su_spoiler class="my-custom-spoiler" title="Socialising in

Level Three areas"] Meeting others indoors

You should not meet anyone who is not in your household indoors in your home or in their home. This applies to all age groups 12 and over. You can meet another household indoors in a public place such as a café or restaurant. The maximum number of people who can meet indoors in a public (not a home) place are 6 which can be from up to 2 separate households.

Children under the age of 12 from these households do not count towards the total number of people counted in a gathering.

Where an individual household includes more than 6 people, they can nevertheless meet as a single household even if the total number of people exceeds 6.

When you meet people from another household indoors you should:

minimise the number of meetings you have with people from other households each day stay at least 2 metres apart from anyone who is not part of your household, unless in a public venue that is operating 1 metre distancing with additional measures being in place to avoid transmission. maintain hand and cough hygiene avoid touching hard surfaces with your hands wash your hands when you arrive, when you leave, when you get home and especially before eating or after touching surfaces not share food or utensils – if eating, each household should bring, prepare and eat its own food separately if possible, keep rooms well ventilated – consider opening

windows or a door

Those at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (including those who had been shielding, people 70 and over, people who are pregnant and people with an underlying medical condition) should strictly follow the physical distancing

guidance.

Meeting others outdoors

You can meet people from other households outdoors in a private garden or in a public place such as a park or an outdoor area of a pub. The maximum number of people who can meet outdoors is 6 which can be from up to 2 separate households.

Children under the age of 12 from these households do not count towards the total number of people counted in a gathering. Children under 12 do not need to maintain physical distance from others. This is to allow children under 12 to play with their friends outside.

Young people aged between 12 and 17 can meet up in groups of up to 6 at a time outdoors and are not subject to the 2 household limit. Physical distancing is required.

Where an individual household includes more than 6 people, they can continue to meet outside as a household even if the total number of people exceeds 6.

You should:

minimise the number of meetings you have with people from other households each day stay at least 2 metres away from anyone who is not part of your household maintain hand and cough hygiene avoid touching hard surfaces with your hands wash your hands when you arrive, when you leave, when you get home and especially before eating or after touching surfaces not share food or utensils – if eating, each household should bring, prepare and eat its own food separately if possible, keep rooms well ventilated – consider opening windows or a door Those at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (including those who had been shielding, people 70 and over, people who are pregnant and people with an underlying medical condition) should strictly follow the physical distancing guidance.

Going into someone else's home If you are meeting people from another household in their garden and the gathering exceeds 6 people, you should only go into their house to:

access the garden - do so quickly and without touching anything

use the toilet – avoid touching surfaces with your hands as much as possible, wipe any surfaces that you do touch with antibacterial wipes, wash your hands thoroughly, dry your hands with a freshly laundered towel or a paper towel, which you should dispose of in a closed bin.

If members of another household are going to visit you and might need to use your toilet, you should ensure appropriate cleaning materials are available. You should also provide either a hand towel for each visiting household or paper towels and a safe disposal option.

Extended households

People who live in different places can form an "extended household" in the following circumstances:

People who live alone

If you are an adult and you live alone, or if all others in your household are under 18, you, any children who live with you, and the members of one other household (of any size) can agree to form an 'extended household'. This will allow people who live alone (or those living only with children under the age of 18) to be considered part of another household in order to reduce loneliness, isolation and to provide mutual social support.

Couples who do not live together

Two adults are in a relationship and they do not live together they, and any children they each live with, can agree to form

an 'extended household'.

However, if one member of a household gets coronavirus, there is a strong likelihood that other members of that household will also catch it. For this reason, there are some important rules that extended households should follow to remain as safe as possible:

a household must not form an extended household with more than one other household

households can end the arrangement at any time, but should not then form an extended household with a new household for at least a 14-day period.

All the adults living in both households should agree to form the extended household. We also encourage parents or guardians to involve their children in discussions. Forming an extended household is an important decision that should be properly discussed and agreed beforehand. Physical distancing between members of an extended household is not required

Once two households have agreed to form an extended household they may meet outdoors or indoors, visit and stay at each other's homes, and do everything that people in other households can do, such as watch TV, share a meal and look after each other's children.

Members of an extended household are considered to be one household for the legal requirements on meeting other households and going outside, and for the guidance in this document about seeing friends and family and about exercise and leisure activity.

You can continue to interact with members of your extended household even if they live in a different area with a different Level of protective measures.

If someone in the extended household develops COVID-19 symptoms, to avoid spreading the virus all members of the extended household must isolate immediately if they met the

symptomatic person at any time between 2 days before and up to 10 days after their symptoms started.

If the symptomatic person tests positive, all members of their direct household must isolate for 14 days from the start of symptoms. Similarly, other members of the extended household must isolate for 14 days from when the most recent contact took place. Isolate means staying in your own home for the full 14 days.

Those at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (including people over 70, people who are pregnant and people with an underlying medical condition) may take part in an extended household arrangement, but should strictly follow the handwashing, surface cleaning and respiratory hygiene guidance on the NHS Inform website.

Shared parenting Where parents do not live in the same household, children can move between their parents' homes in all levels, this includes both supervised and unsupervised visitation.

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[su_spoiler class="my-custom-spoiler" title="Hospitality in Level Three Areas"] Restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars can open indoor and outdoors for the consumption of food and non alcoholic drinks. Alcoholic drinks cannot be served. Last entry is 17:00 and all venues must be closed and all customers off the premises by 18:00.

The maximum number of people you can meet indoors and outdoors in a restaurant, café, pub or bar is 6 which can be from up to 2 separate households.

Children under the age of 12 from these households do not count towards the total number of people meeting outdoors

only.

Where an individual household includes more than 6 people they can continue to meet as a household in hospitality premises, although the venue may impose a smaller group limit.

Table service and the wearing of face-coverings (unless exempt) when not seated by all customers is mandatory in all hospitality venues. When meeting people from more than one other household, you should think beforehand about what size of table you will need to keep physically distanced between members of your group. The venue you are visiting should be able to advise you of booking options.

You will be asked by to provide your contact details for Test and Protect purposes This information is retained for 21 days with a view to sharing with Test and Protect Teams, if required.

Hospitality venues are required to put in place additional measures to minimise transmission of COVID-19. For example hand sanitiser stations and adequate ventilation. There will also be signs to inform customers whether the venue is in a 2 metres or 1 metre social distancing area.

You should stay at least 2 metres apart from people from other households at all times, unless the venue is operating 1 metre distancing due to additional measures being in place to avoid transmission. Physical distancing and good hand hygiene remain the most effective measures in reducing the transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, distancing requirements need to be maintained, where reasonably practicable, at all times, including when waiting to enter premises and when seated.

You should avoid visiting multiple hospitality premises on the same day. In particular, do not visit more than one pub or bar on the same day, as this increases the risk of transmission.

Takeaways can still operate as normal, provided food and drink

is sold for consumption off the premises. Face coverings and physical distancing rules must be followed.

Hotels and other accommodation providers can still serve food to guests staying in their premises up to 22:00. Room service, including alcohol, is allowed as normal. [/su_spoiler]

[su_spoiler class="my-custom-spoiler" title="Restrictions in Level Four Areas"]You should not meet anyone who is not in your household indoors in your home or in their home. You can meet another household indoors in a public place. The maximum number of people who can meet indoors in a public (not a home) place is 6 which can be from up to 2 separate households. Children under the age of 12 from these households do not count towards the total number of people permitted to gather indoors in a public place but do count towards the maximum of 2 households permitted to meet. For example a children's party with 10 children from more than 2 separate households would not be allowable, but 6 adults and 4 children from 2 households could meet.

Children under 12 do not need to maintain physical distance from others indoors.

Where an individual household includes more than 6 people, they can nevertheless meet as a single household even if the total number of people exceeds 6.

You can go into another household to provide care and support for a vulnerable person. This can include providing emotional support for someone whose wellbeing is at risk, including for those who are isolated because of disability or a caring situation. Read Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for unpaid carers

When you meet people from another household indoors you should:

minimise the number of meetings you have with people from other households each day

stay at least 2 metres apart from anyone who is not part of your household, unless in a public venue that is operating 1 metre distancing with additional measures being in place to avoid transmission

maintain hand and cough hygiene

avoid touching hard surfaces with your hands

wash your hands when you arrive, when you leave, when you get home and especially before eating or after touching surfaces

not share food or utensils — if eating, each household should bring, prepare and eat its own food separately

if possible, keep rooms well ventilated – consider opening windows or a door

Those at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (including those who had been shielding, people 70 and over, people who are pregnant and people with an underlying medical condition) should strictly follow the physical distancing guidance.

MEETING UP OUTDOORS

You can meet people from other households outdoors in a private garden or in a public place such as a park. The maximum number of people who can meet outdoors is 6 which can be from up to 2 separate households.

Children under the age of 12 from these households do not count towards the total number of people counted in a gathering. Children under 12 do not need to maintain physical distance from others. This is to allow children under 12 to play with their friends outside.

Young people aged between 12 and 17 can meet up in groups of up to 6 at a time outdoors and are not subject to the 2

household limit. Physical distancing is required.

Where an individual household includes more than 6 people, they can continue to meet outside as a household even if the total number of people exceeds 6.

You should:

minimise the number of meetings you have with people from other households each day

stay at least 2 metres away from anyone who is not part of your household

maintain hand and cough hygiene

avoid touching hard surfaces with your hands

wash your hands when you arrive, when you leave, when you get home and especially before eating or after touching surfaces

not share food or utensils — if eating, each household should bring, prepare and eat its own food separately

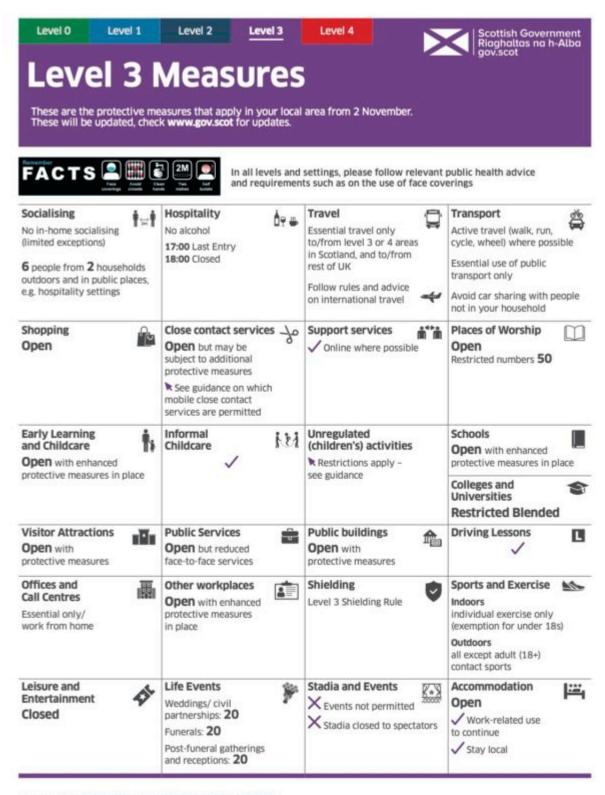
Those at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus (including those who had been shielding, people 70 and over, people who are pregnant and people with an underlying medical condition) should strictly follow the physical distancing guidance.

HOSPITALITY

Restaurants, cafes, pubs and bars will be closed. Sectors guidance is at: sector guidance for tourism and hospitality Takeaways can still operate as normal, provided food and drink is sold for consumption off premises. Face coverings and physical distancing rules must be followed.

Hotels and other accommodation providers can still serve food to qualifying guests i.e. key or exempt workers, staying in their premises up to 22:00. Room service, including alcohol,

is allowed as normal. [/su_spoiler]



Latest updates at https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/

Check here for the latest face coverings information:

https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings/

This table is indicative and will be updated over time. Exemptions apply for these protective measures. Please see guidance for details. Regulations in relation to each level will be published on <u>legislation.gov.uk</u> and relevant public health advice (such as physical distancing and enhanced hygiene measures) applies. Find relevant guidance on <u>www.gov.scot</u>. All restrictions will be kept under review to ensure that they remain proportionate and necessary to address the ongoing public health emergency.

Remember **FACTS** for a safer Scotland

