

Coronavirus – calls to close UK borders

Following the UK lockdown announced on Monday night by the Prime Minister, and the new lockdown which began at midnight on Monday in Scotland, there are calls for the UK to take further steps to protect people living and working here.

The SNP are asking for urgent health measures to be introduced to prevent international transmission of Covid-19 and the new strains. This would mean closing the UK borders to all except essential travel such as freight and other trade. Some other countries have already put tighter restrictions in place and have closed their borders to anyone travelling from the UK.

SNP Shadow Home Secretary, Joanna Cherry QC MP, said: “It is deeply concerning that the Home Secretary is repeating the same mistakes we’ve seen the UK government make throughout this crisis by failing to introduce effective restrictions and health measures at the UK border to prevent the transmission of covid-19 and its new strains.

“The UK government was far too slow to act in the spring, allowing hundreds of thousands of international visitors to enter the country in the middle of a global pandemic without effective measures in place. It seems as though they haven’t learnt a thing.

“No one wants to restrict international travel but it is a necessary part of mitigating against transmission. The UK government must stop all but essential travel, and introduce a far more rigorous system of health checks and quarantining at the border. This is a matter of urgency and the Home Secretary must get a grip of the situation.

“When the SNP called for these measures during the first wave of the pandemic the UK government dismissed our calls for many weeks before finally U-turning and introducing an ineffective system for too short a period. It is time for the Home Secretary to listen and act with powers that remain reserved to Westminster.

“Other countries in Europe and across the world have already introduced these measures – leaving the UK as an outlier. For people to have confidence in the UK government’s approach, it is crucial they put these long-overdue measures in place and set out how this will form part of a considered exit strategy.”