

# Coronavirus – no change to restrictions for now

The First Minister announced the Cabinet's decision on current lockdown restrictions on Tuesday in parliament. She said that there will be no change to the restrictions in mainland Scotland.

There will be a further review on 2 February.

Children will not return to school until at least mid-February and will continue to use remote learning, except for vulnerable children or children whose parents are key workers who will go to school.

Ms Sturgeon said that the current restrictions appear to be having an effect, but she added that we cannot afford to see the rate of infection rise again.

She explained that the government's current planning is for both priority groups 1 and 2 on the JCVI list to be vaccinated by the beginning of February, and those over 70 by mid February. By early May around 3 million people in Scotland should have had their first dose of the vaccine.

The First Minister said: "Any relaxation of lockdown while case numbers remain high, even though they might be declining, could quickly send the situation into reverse.

“We believe that the lockdown restrictions – and the sacrifices everyone continues to make – are beginning to have an impact. However, it is important to be cautious.

“I continue to be very grateful to people across the country for their patience and resilience in the face of this extraordinary challenge.

“At the moment, lockdown is the best way of keeping each other safe, as vaccination continues. It is how we can protect ourselves and our loved ones.”

Due to a breakout on the Isle of Barra, there will be increased restrictions on Barra and Vatersay where Level 4 restrictions will come into effect at midnight on Wednesday.

## **Schools return must be safe**

Scottish Greens education spokesperson Ross Greer said: “For as long as the virus is circulating at such high levels the Greens will support a cautious approach to reopening schools. This is a hugely difficult decision but the safety of pupils, staff and their vulnerable relatives has to come first.

“The Scottish Government must now get a move on and deliver the package of school safety measures proposed by the Greens and twice agreed to by Parliament.

“Last week we saw progress on one of those proposals, with an extra £45 million to recruit desperately needed extra school staff. To ensure our schools are as safe as possible and can reopen quickly though, we need to see real progress on the other measures already agreed by Parliament, particularly the delivery of mass voluntary testing for school staff and senior pupils.”

“More urgently however is the need to provide digital support such as laptops to the young people and families who, nearly a year into this pandemic, are still excluded from online

learning through no fault of their own.”