

Coronavirus – some services will open from Monday

The First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, announced that plans to open up services from Friday and next Monday can go ahead due to decreasing number of cases in Scotland.

People across Scotland can make non-essential journeys in their local authority area from Friday 2 April when a requirement to Stay Local will replace the Stay at Home rule.

Hairdressers, garden centres, car showrooms and forecourts, homeware stores and non-essential click and collect services will be able to open from 5 April 2021, subject to enhanced safety measures including physical distancing, face coverings and pre-booking where appropriate.

More college students will be able to return to on-campus learning and 12-17 year-olds will be able to resume outdoor contact sports from this date.

Restrictions on non-essential travel **across** local authority boundaries will remain in place. People must stay within their council area for non-essential shopping and should only travel to another area for essential shopping if there are no practical alternatives.

People should also continue to work from home where they can to prevent unnecessary contact that could risk transmission of the virus.

The latest easing of restrictions is announced as data shows continued suppression of Covid-19, and progress on vaccination.

Virtually all over 65 year olds have now received a first dose of the vaccine, and the average daily case rate is now 539 new cases per day, a decline of more than 75% since early January. In addition 57% of those aged 50 to 54 have received their first dose of vaccine, showing that the target of vaccinating all those over 50 by the middle of April is probably achievable.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: "We have made progress both in suppressing the virus and in vaccination, and therefore the changes I previously indicated will go ahead on 2 and 5 April.

"The stay at home rule is being replaced by a requirement to stay local – while Covid levels remain high in some areas, and while a lot of people remain unvaccinated, we do not want the virus to spread from areas with relatively high prevalence to areas with low rates of infection. That's why the current travel restrictions, which prevent non-essential travel outside your local authority area, are really important.

"It will be easier to relax more restrictions in the future if case numbers remain under control, so when things open up slightly this weekend please continue to stick to the rules, and follow the advice and the instructions given by store staff to keep you and the other customers safe.

"Stay at home – for now – protect the NHS, and follow the FACTS advice when you are out and about to help save lives."

