

Coronavirus – route out of lockdown – further relaxations

Today the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon announced that our route out of lockdown will go just a little bit more quickly.

The First Minister confirmed that all parts of the country will move to Level 3 from Monday 26 April.

The remaining travel restrictions within Scotland will be lifted and travel within the UK will be permitted for any purpose.

The First Minister said that if everyone continues to follow the rules, it is expected that all of Scotland will move to Level 2 on Monday 17 May.

From Monday 26 April 2021 hospitality venues such as cafés, pubs and restaurants can reopen, along with tourist accommodation. Non-essential retail outlets and close contact services such as beauty salons can also reopen, in addition to indoor attractions and public buildings such as galleries, museums and libraries.

Further changes from 26 April 2021 include:

- adults on the shielding list can return to the workplace, if they cannot work from home, while children who have been shielding can return to school
- non-essential work inside people's homes – such as

painting, decorating or repairing – will be permitted, subject to mitigations

- non-essential informal childcare will resume
- driving lessons and tests can take place, while gyms and swimming pools can reopen for individual exercise
- the attendance limit for funerals and weddings – and related events such as receptions – will increase to 50
- cafés, pubs and restaurants can resume full outdoor service, subject to local licensing, and serve food indoors without alcohol until 8pm
- takeaways to resume normal service, with physical distancing and face masks in premises

The First Minister also announced that rapid coronavirus tests will be made available to anyone in Scotland and to those planning travel to the islands. From today, anyone planning travel to the islands next week can order a free home test kit online. The first test should be taken three days before travel and the second on the day of departure.

From Monday, lateral flow home test kits will be available to anyone in the wider population who does not have Covid-19 symptoms. They can be picked up from local walk/drive-through test sites for people to test themselves twice-weekly. Anyone in Scotland who develops Covid-19 symptoms should self-isolate and book a PCR test. The expansion is aimed at finding cases that would otherwise go undetected, so those people can self-isolate and avoid transmitting the virus to those around them.

Ms Sturgeon said: “The changes that come into force next week have been hard earned by all of us. I know that many will be looking forward – quite rightly – to their first drink in a beer garden, to catching up with a friend in a café, or to going on holiday somewhere in Scotland.

“But even as we enjoy those moments, we still need to be careful. We must remember the virus is more infectious now than it was when bars and cafés were last open, so we must

still stick to the rules. However, we are hopeful of seeing sustained progress in the weeks and months ahead.

“We are keeping island communities in Level 3 at the moment, so that we can allow travel between those communities and the rest of Scotland. If you are planning to travel to an island and do not have Covid-19 symptoms, we will encourage you to take two lateral flow tests for COVID-19 before you depart. This is an important way to reduce the risk of bringing Covid-19 into island communities. If you are travelling to an island next week, it is possible to get tests from today, and I would encourage you to do that.”