

Coronavirus – route out of lockdown

The First Minister held a media briefing today, the first since the election, when she announced some measures which will accelerate the route out of lockdown.

Scots will now be able to meet in private homes as most of mainland Scotland moves to Level 2, with some restrictions on hospitality, entertainment, education and sport also being eased.

In a moderate acceleration of previous plans, the number of people and households that can meet inside homes in Level 2 has been increased to six people from three households.

The new rules will come into effect on Monday 17 May, and will apply to all mainland local authority areas with the exception of Moray, which is experiencing a high and increasing number of cases. As a result, Moray is likely to remain in Level 3 for a further period of at least three weeks, with travel in and out of the area prohibited other than for permitted purposes. A final decision on this will be made at the end of this week.

The Scottish Government is working with Moray Council and Grampian Health Board to reduce case numbers, and will provide financial support for affected hospitality and leisure businesses if Level 3 restrictions do remain in place.

As the virus is now sufficiently under control in the Western

Isles, Orkney, Shetland and remote Highland and Argyll islands, these communities are expected to move straight to Level 1.

From 17 May, anyone entering Scotland from countries on a new international travel 'Green List' will not be required to quarantine on arrival, but will have to take a PCR test for COVID-19. The Green List will initially be the same as that in place for England but will be subject to review based on Scotland's specific needs.

Under Level 2 restrictions:

- up to six people from three households will be able to meet in each other's homes or gardens without physical distancing – this was the limit previously planned for Level 1 but has now been accelerated for areas in Level 2. People will be encouraged to use their judgment about close physical contact with others
- up to six people from three households will be able to meet indoors in places such as pubs, cafes and restaurants, while up to eight people from eight households will be able to meet outdoors
- pubs and restaurants will be able to serve alcohol indoors until 10:30pm in two-hour booked slots
- venues including cinemas, theatres, concert halls, music venues, comedy clubs, amusement arcades, casinos, snooker halls and bingo halls will be able to reopen
- events will resume with a maximum capacity of 100 people indoors, 250 outdoors where there is unrestricted standing and 500 for events with seating. Organisers will be allowed to apply to hold bigger events
- outdoor contact sports and indoor group exercise classes will be able to restart
- more than one person will be able to sing during religious services
- amateur performing arts groups will be able to perform outdoors

- colleges and universities will have more flexibility to resume in-person learning

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: “The success of the vaccination programme, and continued high compliance with the various rules and restrictions, means that we have seen continued suppression of the virus in the last three weeks. As a result the situation overall is a very positive one, and we are now in a position to relax more restrictions and restore much more normality to our everyday lives.

“I know just how unwelcome the likelihood of a further period in Level 3 must be to people in Moray, and we are doing everything possible to ensure that any extension of Level 3 is for as short a period as possible. I would appeal to everyone living in the region to follow all the public health advice so that we can get the situation back under control and allow Moray to get back on a positive track just as quickly as possible.

“It is almost eight months since most of us have been able to meet in each other’s homes. While I know all of us have been looking forward to being able to do that again, I would encourage everyone to please use judgement – close physical contact still carries risk, so if you have loved ones who are vulnerable for any reason, you should still be careful. And you should perhaps limit the overall number of people that you choose to have close physical contact with.

“We still intend to be highly cautious on international travel, given the risk of new variants, but we consider that the situation now allows us to begin a careful move away from blanket restrictions on non-essential travel. Everyone should think seriously about whether they really need to travel abroad this summer. I know for many people international travel is about family connections. But when it comes to holidays abroad, my advice continues to be to err on the side of caution and to staycation this summer.”

Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar said: “This news will bring hope and optimism across Scotland, giving us a light at the end of the tunnel where we know we can be reunited properly with our loved ones.

“I, like so many across the country, can’t wait to hug my granny.

“There is some good news in this announcement for businesses.

“But, we must still recognise the economic and jobs crisis we face.

“That will not end when the restrictions do and, as Scottish Labour has called for, we need to see a much more ambitious scheme in place to support jobs, businesses and communities across Scotland.

“Our national recovery must now be the singular focus of the parliament.”



Cllr Adam McVey Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council ©2021
The Edinburgh Reporter

Council Leader, Adam McVey said: “This announcement is great news for our residents and businesses. The sacrifices we’ve had to make over the last year have protected our communities and meant we’re able to loosen restrictions safely – while we continue to suppress the virus and protect our NHS and frontline workers. It gives us further hope that we’re moving in the right direction thanks to the continued success of the vaccine rollout, universal testing and making sure we’re still sticking to the guidelines.

“I know being able to hug our loved ones will mean the world to people and families across our City.

“We’re continuing to support these efforts while also doing all we can to help our businesses’ recovery with [flexible outdoor seating arrangements and waiving permit fees for our hospitality sector](#) and it’s great to hear all the positive feedback we’re getting from the business we’ve supported.

“We’re also looking to inspire and encourage our residents to get back out safely and enjoy all that our Capital has to offer through our ForeverEdinburgh campaign’s [The Story Never Ends](#) and [Shop Here This Year](#).

“Both initiatives are inspiring people to rediscover our City and share our experiences of the things we do and places we go to in enjoying all Edinburgh has to offer. Our city centre attractions, retailers and restaurants and cafes have done an amazing job making our city centre feel like the city centre again, and I hope as many people as possible will get behind our businesses and share their love for our Capital.”

Depute Leader, Cammy Day, said: “We continue to listen to and work with businesses to help them bounce back as quickly as possible from what has been an incredibly tough year. We’re collaborating closely with organisations such as Essential Edinburgh, Edinburgh’s Tourism Action Group (ETAG), VisitScotland, the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses to ensure we’re working with the different sectors to understand where the pressure points are while inviting people back into our unique neighbourhoods, buzzing city centre and beautiful outdoor spaces. Edinburgh really does have something for everyone and we’re so excited to be able to share that once again.

I also welcome the news that we will be able to invite more friends and family into our homes and gardens. After so long keeping our distance from those we love, giving them a well-deserved hug or simply holding a hand will be a very emotional moment for many. We still need to take care, though, so it’s crucial we all use our own careful judgement.

Liz McAreavey, Chief Executive of the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, said: “The continued return to something closer to normality is highly encouraging, and we are delighted that the city’s hard-hit hospitality sector can once again welcome customers indoors and out. In particular, it is also pleasing

to note the city council's determination to promote the city centre, which has been hardest hit by the pandemic. The recovery of our city centre is vital to the economic, social and emotional recovery of the Capital. Edinburgh Chamber is keen to work with both the incoming Scottish Government and The City of Edinburgh Council to ensure together we achieve the fairest, most sustainable recovery as quickly as possible."

Donald Emslie, Chair of ETAG, said: "The latest easing of restrictions is very welcome news indeed for our tourism and hospitality businesses and marks another key milestone on the road to recovery. Businesses have worked extremely hard over the last few weeks and months and have invested lots of time and money to create safe and welcoming spaces for everyone.

"ETAG continue to work in partnership with The City of Edinburgh Council, VisitScotland and others to support the ForeverEdinburgh initiative and hope that through that we are able to encourage people to venture back out to meet with friends and family and to enjoy all that Edinburgh has to offer while supporting the sector through the reopening period."

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) protection levels: what you can do](#)

Level 1 restrictions will apply from Monday in:

- the Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney
- all islands in Highland, except for Skye given its fixed link with the mainland
- the Inner Hebrides islands in Argyll, including Islay, Jura and Mull

Countries on the green list are:

- Australia

- Brunei
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Gibraltar
- Iceland
- Israel
- New Zealand
- Portugal
- Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha
- Singapore
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

If you enter Scotland from a red list country – one of the countries identified as acute-risk under our current regulations – you will be required to enter a managed isolation hotel and stay there for 10 days. Due to changes coming into force from tomorrow, those countries will include Turkey, the Maldives and Nepal.

If you arrive from a country on the amber list – which will be the majority of countries – you must self-isolate at home for 10 days, and take two PCR tests during this period.

A new app – [Check in Scotland](#) – was launched at the end of April, to help Test and Protect easily contact people who need to self isolate. Please download and use the app if you can.



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