

# **Coronavirus – hospitality firms accuse government of not listening**

**At a virtual recall of parliament on Tuesday the First Minister announced a move to Level 0 restrictions for the whole country from 19 July.**

Ms Sturgeon said during her statement that all licensed premises must close at midnight. She explained: “Hospitality venues in level 0 – in all parts of Scotland – will require to close at midnight. This is a change to what we had previously indicated for level 0 – that venues should follow local licensing rules.

“This reflects the fact that indoor hospitality – despite the sector’s sterling efforts – remains a relatively risky environment, particularly later at night when people may be less likely to follow rules. A midnight closing time represents progress from level 1 and 2 but it will help mitigate some of this risk.”

Stephen Montgomery, Group Spokesperson, Scottish Hospitality Group, said his members were opposed to the move. He said: “The midnight curfew is just a made-up time with no evidence to justify it as our FOI enquiry earlier in the year proved. The government didn’t seek our input as the people who understand how hospitality works in the real world. And we didn’t even get the courtesy of being told about this in our ongoing discussions with the government.

“It’s like Groundhog Day with our warnings about driving people into house parties and other uncontrolled spaces that lack all the precautions you find in responsible pubs, restaurants and hotels. The government didn’t listen last year when we cautioned them about this and they’re not listening now.

“The best that can be said is that level 0 is an improvement on lockdowns for most businesses. But let’s remember that late-night, wedding and music venues are still hugely affected. We have always supported sensible and proportionate public health measures. The hospitality sector can be part of the solution not part of the problem. It’s tragic that the government doesn’t seem to see us that way.”