

Coronavirus – moving to Level 0 from 19 July

Confirming the change to Level 0 during a statement to parliament on Tuesday over video link, the First Minister urged people to stick to Covid-19 measures and “sensible precautions” to suppress Covid-19 to help create conditions that will allow Scotland to move beyond Level 0 on 9 August.



The First Minister addresses a virtual recall of parliament
PHOTO courtesy of The Scottish Government

From 00:01 on Monday 19 July 2021, physical distancing in Level 0 will reduce to 1 metre in all indoor public settings and outdoors. Additionally, informal social gatherings of up to 15 people from 15 households will be permitted outdoors without physical distancing. Gatherings of up to 10 people from four households will be permitted in all indoor public settings with 1 metre physical distancing.

Other easings to Level 0 taking effect at that time include:

- under-12s will no longer count towards the number of households that can gather indoors in public spaces and homes
- hospitality settings can open till midnight, if their current licence permits that, and customers will no longer be required to pre-book a two-hour slot to go to a pub or restaurant but will still be required to provide contact details to assist Test & Protect
- up to 200 people will be able to gather at weddings and funerals

Employers are asked to continue to support home working where possible until we move beyond Level 0.

From 04:00 Monday 19 July, travellers who are fully vaccinated through a UK vaccination programme and children arriving into Scotland from Amber List countries will no longer be required to self-isolate and take a day eight test, but adults and children over 12 will still take tests before travelling and on day two after arrival. Anyone testing positive for or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 will still require to isolate for 10 days.

A survey is being launched for those at highest risk from COVID-19 to gather views on what additional support might be needed as restrictions ease. Later this week, the Chief Medical Officer will also write to this group with advice on

what moving to Level 0 will mean for them.

First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said: "While Scotland will move to Level 0 from next Monday, we will do so with certain modifications to our original indicative plans. This is intended to ensure that our pace of easing restrictions is sensible in light of the challenge we continue to face from the Delta variant. There is no doubt that Delta has become, unfortunately, something of a game-changer – even for countries on course to achieving full vaccine protection – so COVID does remain a threat that we must treat seriously.

"The Scottish Government understands the temptation to lift more restrictions more quickly. In our view, and in line with clinical advice and modelling, a gradual approach stands the best chance of minimising further health harm and loss of life – and also because a gradual approach stands the best chance of being a sustainable approach, it will be better in the long term for the economy as well.

"We are easing restrictions next week – but we are not abandoning them. We will also keep in place for now certain other measures – such as the requirement to wear face coverings, co-operate with test and protect teams, and comply with advice on good hygiene and ventilation.

"If we do all of this, frustrating though it all continues increasingly to be, we will help protect ourselves and our loved ones. As we continue to complete the vaccination programme, which does offer us still the route back to greater normality, we will make it easier for more restrictions to be gradually and sensibly lifted in the weeks ahead."

In Edinburgh

Depute Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council, Cllr Cammy Day, said: "It's very good news that case numbers appear to be falling now but there's no getting away from the fact they

remain uncomfortably high in the city and we have to take action to mitigate the spread. I think residents will share our view that it's right to go for a more cautious reopening on 19 July so that we can enjoy greater freedoms – but not at a pace which puts our road to recovery at further risk.

“Vaccination is the key way we'll get through this and limit the virus's impact on people's health and the ability of hospitals to cope. That's why I'd reiterate our call for everyone in Edinburgh who's eligible for their first vaccination or is at least eight weeks past their first dose to come forward and get a jab. It's easier than ever with drop-in vaccinations offered at centres right across the city, as well as the NHS Lothian vaccine bus that's been touring about high footfall areas.

“I know businesses are anxious to get back to normal as quickly as possible and I'm sure there will be disappointment in the hospitality sector about the mandatory midnight closing time. However, it's crucial we don't run unnecessary risks while cases are still so high locally. We've been working extremely closely with the business community to help advise and support them through and out of this crisis and to highlight all our city has to offer through the Forever Edinburgh promotional campaign. And I very much hope the Scottish Government will continue to support the hospitality industry, which has been one of the hardest hit during this crisis.

“Our environmental health teams are supporting businesses to help them understand how they can adapt their premises and working arrangements in line with the latest public health guidance. Meanwhile we've distributed approximately £250m in funding to businesses, individuals and organisations hit hard by the pandemic. And together with our partners we're working tirelessly to help deliver as strong, green and fair a recovery for Edinburgh's economy as possible following the enormous challenges of the past 17 months.

“As a Council we’re making good progress on reopening our services. More and more libraries are now open again and from yesterday we began reopening community centres on a phased basis so that youth work and community activities for adults can get up and running once more. The City Art Centre has three fantastic free exhibitions running throughout the summer and we’re progressing plans to reopen our museums as soon as we can.

“Regular testing is a really good way for all of us to keep making sure we’re not unwittingly carrying the virus and putting others at risk, especially as one in three cases don’t show any symptoms. You can order testing kits online at <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>, pick them up in pharmacies or at one of our community testing centres and help us monitor the spread in our communities. And even when we’re able to start meeting up in larger groups, please take care and follow the guidance on ventilation, mask-wearing and hygiene. We can get through this if we all stick together and look after each other.”



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