

Coronavirus – today's numbers and tomorrow's relaxation of the rules

There are 6,329 new cases of Covid-19 reported today, and unusually 4 deaths are also reported taking the death toll to 10,199. (Register offices are closed at the weekends).

Other numbers are very similar and the only statistics showing an upward move are the number of those who have been vaccinated with either the first or second dose or indeed the booster dose. The last category now number 3,252,819.

Restrictions on the number of households meeting at home or at indoor gatherings and one metre physical distancing in hospitality and leisure settings will be lifted from 5am on Monday.

The First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, told the BBC Sunday Morning show that the restrictions over this last month have been worth it although she recognised that they have had a "big impact on businesses and individuals". She also admitted that the anticipated 50,000 daily cases had not materialised but it was largely down to the recent restrictions and also the response to the booster programme.

Nightclubs will be allowed to reopen although Covid passports will be required. The Covid certification scheme is not to be

extended at present. Working from home will remain the official government advice although a hybrid return to work from the beginning of February will be discussed with business.

The public are advised to continue to test before meeting others and limit the number of contacts where possible.

Face coverings remain mandatory in public places and on public transport.

When addressing MSPs at The Scottish Parliament on Tuesday the First Minister said: "A combination of booster vaccinations, the willingness of the public to adapt their behaviour to help stem transmission, and the temporary protective measures introduced in December, has helped blunt the impact of the Omicron wave."

Ms Sturgeon confirmed that the number of new positive cases in the preceding 13 days had fallen significantly, and that was coupled with good news about a fall in the number of people in hospital or ICU.

In addition non-professional indoor contact sports may resume from Monday.