

RF/DM/PW

28th May 2020

Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister of Scotland
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

Dear First Minister

Route Map for Easing Lockdown and Test and Protect

I write in relation to today's announcements on the route map for easing lockdown, the commencement of phase 1, and the launch of Test and Protect.

As you know, we welcomed the guidance issued on Test and Protect. One of the STUC's five red lines for any easing of lockdown is that effective contact tracing is in place.

We recognise that the demand for test and trace is likely to increase as the route map progresses, and it is going to be of particular importance as more workers are expected to return to the workplace, and when more school classes are expected to re-open. We would not expect Test and Protect to be at full capacity at this point. However, we note the view of the Scottish Government that it will require to be expanded at pace.

As the Government recognises, alongside the provision of the guidance and the widest possible publicity for Test and Protect, it is essential that:

2.

First Minister of Scotland
28th May 2020

- Infection levels are low enough to allow for the system to operate effectively.
- Daily testing is high enough. We note the estimates of 15,500 per day as a requirement for effective operation when the system is fully operating.
- Sufficient contact tracers are employed without diverting from other essential health and functions. We accept that not all of the 2,000 anticipated contact tracers need yet be in place but have previously raised concerns about progress on reaching this capacity.

In the STUC's view, it is equally essential that there are no disincentives to full participation through bad employer behaviours. This might manifest from unsympathetic responses to employees undertaking the precautionary measures outlined in the guidance, or through employees on insecure and zero hours contracts fearing for their future employment.

We are also concerned that employers will choose to resort to the use of the miserly Statutory Sick Pay for those unable to work or to fail to facilitate homeworking for those off but without symptoms. This would cause increased hardship for many workers who are already in dire financial straits.

As part of their special risk assessments, employers should be expected to make clear statements of policy in support of Test and Protect and outline their policy to support workers to comply with it.

In the context of the issues raised in this letter, we will be seeking comfort in our regular meetings with Government that progress is being made.

This will be particularly vital as our affiliates seek to make progress in agreeing guidance for reopening businesses, education establishments and other parts of the public sector which are currently in lockdown.

/.....

3.

First Minister of Scotland
28th May 2020

Furthermore, we would ask you to use every available opportunity to stress to employers that anything short of full support for workers as they engage with Test and Protect would be a dereliction of their duty towards each employee and to the national effort to combat the virus.

Yours sincerely

Personal Data

Rozanne Foyer
General Secretary Designate