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COVID-19 – Framework for Decision Making

Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis

Update on approach to physical distancing in light of advice from the Scottish Government
COVID-19 Advisory Group

2 July 2020



Introduction

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- ❖ Our Approach to physical distancing
- ❖ Update on and confirmation of changes for the remainder of Phase 2

This publication provides an update on the approach to physical distancing in Scotland as we move through the COVID-19 crisis. This approach continues to be informed by evidence and has been updated in light of published advice from the Scottish Government COVID-19 Advisory Group.

The publication also briefly updates on the final stage of Phase 2. Continued progress in suppressing the virus, as measured by the latest data, means that we are able to confirm the indicative dates for the remainder of Phase 2, concerning relaxation of the 5 mile guidance, the re-opening of self-contained, self-catering accommodation and the re-opening of outdoor hospitality. Changes concerning the rules on children and young-people meeting up are also set out.

Our Approach to physical distancing

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On 23 June the First Minister announced a review by the COVID-19 Advisory Group on the 2 metre physical distancing rule. That advice has today been published [\[add link\]](#). Their advice makes clear that the fundamental science around distance and transmission remains unchanged and that risk increases with proximity to an infected individual.

‘The risk of transmission will be increased if the physical distancing recommendation is reduced to 1 metre from 2 metres. This is not only because of the increased risk of direct transmission from respiratory secretions, but also because of increased surface contamination that would occur in indoor environments with higher occupancy.’

However there is also a need to take into account the four harms as set out in our *Framework for Decision Making*. The framework made clear that, after the necessary condition of suppressing the virus has been met, decisions can be taken which seek to minimise overall harm viewed across health, the economy and broader society. What this means is that policy decisions are required that balance any increased transmission risk from changing the 2 metre requirement, given the current status of the epidemic, with the reduction in other harms that would stem from such a change to the 2 metre requirement.

‘In balancing these considerations, a value judgement must be taken as to whether reducing the physical distancing to 1 metre is a tolerable risk. If this is a policy decision, it must be accompanied by clear guidance on spacing in any indoor environment, emphasis on surface cleaning, hand hygiene and cough etiquette. Messaging must be clear that the virus is still present and a continued threat.’

Consistent with the advice set out from the Advisory Group above we propose to retain 2 metres as the default physical distancing requirement for Phase 3, as it has been in previous phases of the Route Map. We are, however, intending to make exceptions to this 2 metre requirement for a limited number of sectors and settings, which are deemed appropriate. These exceptions would take into account the wider harms caused by the 2 metre rule – to broader health, the economy and society – as well as transmission risk, particularly in known high-transmission risk settings. In such sectors and settings where the exception applies, individual workplaces, premises or settings may be permitted to move to 1 metre distancing only where agreed risk mitigation measures are in place. Potential illustrative examples are set out below.

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It must be noted that in the event of any localised outbreaks or a national resurgence of the virus, these exceptions may be removed and the 2 metre rule reimposed alongside any further measures that are deemed necessary.

The Scottish Government will set out which sectors and settings are considered appropriate for exceptions. At present consider the following sectors and settings appropriate for exceptions to the 2 metre rule, As noted, this is not a blanket exception for each sector; individual settings must implement agreed mitigations to qualify for the exception:

- Public Transport
- Outdoor hospitality
- Indoor hospitality
- Retail

We will continue to review other settings including in the public sector and the justice system for potential exceptions where it is safe to do so. We will engage with local authority partners in relation to the safe delivery of public services and with third sector partners. Settings providing essential services where reduced distancing requirements are already in effect and appropriate mitigations have been introduced will not be affected by these changes.

Over recent weeks, we have produced sectoral guidance on safe working with businesses and trades unions. Potential mitigation of risks in different settings has been part of these discussions. Ahead of the reopening of hospitality and tourism, further guidance is also being prepared on the collection of customer contact details to support Test and Protect, which is an important additional mitigating measure.


A further principle in the *Framework for Decision Making* is that decisions and associated restrictions and requirements should be able to be clearly communicated, in order to support effective compliance. Lack of compliance will increase transmission risk.


Any changes to the physical distancing required should be simple enough to be effectively understood, implemented and followed. For example, clear signage will need to be in place to advise customers that they are entering a 1 metre zone so that people are aware both of the potentially increased transmission risk in such areas and that mitigations should be in place.

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In order to ensure effective implementation of mitigations we must also ensure that appropriate processes and resources are in place. Furthermore, in many settings, additional staff training will be required and workplace risk assessments should be undertaken.

By way of example, mitigations could include: Perspex dividers; back-to-back seating; enhanced ventilation; face coverings; customer flow, restrictions on music in hospitality settings (leading to raised voices) and taking contact details for customers for contact-tracing purposes. Compliance with Test & Protect protocols will be critical. A set of potential mitigations is set out in the **table below** for illustration, but this should not be seen as the final or complete set as these need to be agreed sector by sector.

Category in Route Map	Sector	Examples of mitigations (not exhaustive)	Economic contributions
 Shopping, eating and drinking out	Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way systems • Staggering arrival and departure times of staff • Contactless payments • Signage, tannoy announcements • Hand sanitation facilities at entry and exit points and common areas. • Screens to create a physical barrier between people, for example at till points. • Supply of hand sanitiser for employees • Increase ventilation 	<p>Retail accounts for nearly 5% of the economy and around 230,000 jobs.</p> <p>Figures on monthly business turnover index for Scotland show that in April turnover in non-food retail had declined significantly (non-food retail was 10, where less than 50 represents a decline).</p>
	Indoor hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No standing – all customers seated • Face coverings by staff • Clear systems for safe ordering and payments • Clear systems for safe use of toilet facilities • Use of screens between seating areas • Good ventilation • Good signage • Reduced noise measures i.e. no background music, to reduce need for customers to shout • Clear messaging on need to provide contact details to support Test & Protect 	<p>Indoor and outdoor hospitality are captured in the Accommodation and Food Service Sector. The sector as a whole accounts for just over 3% of the economy and around 210,000 jobs.</p> <p>Figures on monthly business turnover index for Scotland show that in April turnover in Accommodation and Food Services declined significantly (at 3, where less than 50 represents a decline).</p>
	Outdoor hospitality	<p>As above for indoor hospitality plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No standing at outdoor bar areas 	

Category in Route Map	Sector	Examples of mitigations (not exhaustive)	Economic contributions
 Getting around	Public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-back seating • Perspex screens between seats Improved ventilation • Mounted sanitizers, wipes and bins • Disposable or easy wash seat covers • Hands free bell pushes 	<p>The Transport and Storage sector accounts for around 4% of the economy and 28,000 jobs.</p> <p>Figures on monthly business turnover index for Scotland show that in April turnover in Transport, Storage and Communication declined and was at 24 (where less than 50 represents a decline).</p> <p>Transport is a derived demand and an enabler of economic activity and therefore its economic contribution is greater than the sectoral output figures shown above.</p>

Update on and confirmation of changes for the remainder of Phase 2

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Over the last week, the number of people in Scotland who could be infectious with Covid-19 has declined by almost 30%, and is now estimated at around 1,500. We continue to see a sustained decline in COVID-19 deaths. There has been a sustained decline in new cases since 23rd April and a sustained decline in new hospital and ICU admissions.

In light of the data and outcome of the Review on social distancing we can now confirm dates for the remainder of Phase 2:

- Travel distance limit relaxed – 3 July
- Self-catering accommodation and second homes (without shared facilities) permitted – 3 July
- Outdoor hospitality (subject to physical distancing rules and public health advice) – 6 July

In addition to this we are also introducing two new measures to come into effect on 3 July for children and young people that should allow significant improvements to life, particularly during the school holidays.

- **For under 12s (0-11)** the existing rules for contact with other households continue, but children under 12 are not required to maintain physical distancing with other children or adults outdoors. The number of overall household contacts in one day remains in line with existing guidance and adults will need to maintain physical distancing.
- **For over 12s (12-17)** Older children and young people in this age group can continue to meet in groups outdoors as in existing rules (maximum of 3 households in the group, no more than 8 people in total). However, there is no limit to the number of these groups that the young person can meet in a day providing that each contact aligns with the guidance. We want these young people to be able to meet those of their choosing safely. They should continue to physically distance.



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