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Covid in Scotland: Shops, gyms, pools and pubs reopen after lockdown

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Coronavirus



| Pubs and restaurants reopen for the first time in four months

Shops, gyms, swimming pools, pubs, restaurants and cafes in Scotland have reopened after a four month-long winter lockdown.

Early morning queues formed at fashion retailers in Glasgow and Edinburgh as shoppers waited for doors opening.

Travel restrictions have also been eased, allowing trips to other parts of the UK for non-essential reasons.

Ministers say restrictions can be eased as the most vulnerable people have been offered their first vaccine dose.

Scotland has been in level four lockdown since 26 December, with all non-essential shops, leisure facilities, and hospitality venues closed.

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Driving lessons and tests can resume, while nail salons, museums and holiday accommodation can also reopen.

As the mainland moves into level three restrictions many businesses will still be subject to strict rules on capacity and social distancing.

Unlike England, pubs and restaurants will be able open indoors until 20:00 - but they will only be able to serve alcohol to customers seated outside.



Queues formed on Glasgow's Argyle Street early on Monday ahead of the shops reopening

A number of shops across Scotland opened early to mark the easing of restrictions with queues outside many larger retailers.

Braehead Shopping Centre near Glasgow opened at 07:00, with some customers outside for an hour beforehand.

Katie Moody, of the city's Princes Square shopping centre, said: "People do seem a bit more comfortable about coming out this time.

"Glaswegians love to shop, we have seen queues in the city and I think there are just some things you want to experience in person and we are giving them that back."

'Champing at the bit'

In Inverness, restaurateur Norman MacDonald MBE opened his Cafe 1 restaurant for the first time since Christmas Eve.

He said: "It is great we are open, and the team is back in and champing at the bit to look after their customers."

Lush on Edinburgh's Princes Street had a small queue waiting. Manager Alan Brown said: "We're just really excited to be speaking to people again after such a long time."

Liz Cameron from the Scottish Chamber of Commerce said the excitement was "fantastic" for businesses.

She added: "We must remember it's been a long time, and we have a lot of costs we have to be able to recoup and it will not happen in a day or a week.

"It's the start of our journey but let's remember this is about trying to save as many jobs as possible. "



GETTY IMAGES

Friends enjoyed the chance to meet up over a pint outside the Three Sisters in Edinburgh



Small groups of people, some with blankets over their laps, gathered for post-work drinks on Edinburgh's George Street



GETTY IMAGES

Early pub customers enjoy an outside drink in Glasgow city centre

Public Health expert Prof Devi Sridhar said infection numbers were low enough to support the opening up of a large part of society.

She told BBC Radio's **Good Morning Scotland**: "The end is in sight within weeks. We can see the full adult population getting vaccines by the summer."

She said Covid testing would also make a difference.

"I would really encourage people to get tested both the PCR and at home lateral flow testing," she added.

"The safest way to keep bars and pubs and indoor hospitality open is to make sure that nobody inside is infectious."

What is now allowed in Scotland?

- Up to six people from two households can socialise indoors in a public place such as a café or restaurant
- Unrestricted travel within Scotland, England and Wales (subject to other local restrictions in place)

- All shops and close contact services (like nail salons and tattoo parlours) can open
 - Hospitality venues like cafes, pubs and restaurants can open until 20:00 indoors (no alcohol)
 - They can serve alcohol outdoors according to local licensing laws
 - Non-essential childcare permitted
 - Non-essential in-house work (like painter and decorators) permitted
 - Tourist accommodation to reopen (self-catering accommodation to be restricted in line with rules on indoor gathering)
 - Driving lessons and tests can take place
 - Funerals and weddings including wakes and receptions can take place with up to 50 people (alcohol permitted)
 - Gyms and swimming pools can reopen for individual exercise
 - Indoor attractions and public buildings such as galleries, museums and libraries can open
 - Takeaway food can be collected indoors
-

Rapid testing kits are being made **available to everyone in the country**. The lateral flow tests can be picked up without an appointment from walk-in or drive through test sites from 15:30 every day.

And the Scottish government is launching a new app - Check In Scotland - making it easier for businesses to collect contact tracing details.

'We're really excited'



Among those reopening their business is Barry Cowan from The Walled Garden Touring Park, near Maybole in Ayrshire.

He had to open his gates four hours earlier than usual to meet demand.

He said the caravan park would be operating at half capacity so holiday-makers have more space. But with restrictions on foreign travel still in place, Mr Cowan is booked into August and September.

"We can't wait, we're really, really excited and we're sure we're going to have a good season," he said.



| Kurt McGonigle is excited about reopening his tattoo studio

Hepcat Tattoos in Glasgow is one of the "close contact businesses" that will be open for the first time in four months.

Pent-up demand means most of Kurt McGonigle's tattooists are booked up for months to come.

"We were closed for four months so most of our income stopped, so we're all really excited to be going back to work and get back to normal," Mr McGonigle said.



| Steven Annand wants to see people able to enjoy alcohol inside pubs and restaurants

Steve Annand, of drinks wholesaler Inverarity Morton, said the lifting of lockdown was "a bit of light at the end of the tunnel - but there's still a good way to travel before we're back to normal levels".

Permitting bars and restaurants to serve drinks indoors will be the key to rebuilding after a "really difficult" few months.

"I think we need to get back to enjoying alcohol inside, in an indoor environment, in bars and restaurants," he said.

"That is what's going to give us the opportunity to try and trade normally and rebuild our business and rebuild the whole wholesale sector."

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