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Covid: Lanarkshire councils argue against Level 4 lockdown

🕒 28 October 2020



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Council leaders in North and South Lanarkshire have urged the first minister not to place both areas into the highest Covid restrictions.

Nicola Sturgeon had previously indicated that the area could be put into Level 4.

Schools would stay open but other rules would resemble March's lockdown which included non-essential shop closures.

In a joint letter the chief executives of both local authorities argue Level 3 would be more appropriate.

It reads: "There is emerging clear evidence in Lanarkshire that the very steep rise has been halted and that there is an indication that cases are falling to some extent."

- What level might your area be heading into?

Ms Sturgeon is expect to finalise details of the regional restrictions on Wednesday evening ahead of an announcement in the Scottish Parliament on Thursday.

The eight-page letter from the two local authorities is also signed by the chief executive of NHS Lanarkshire and Police Scotland's divisional commander for Lanarkshire.

It states that in recent days the health board has seen the first fall in the percentage of positive tests since mid-April.

And it claims the "very rapid growth" in Lanarkshire is "clearly slowing down" as a result of the increased restrictions.

Analysis of the figures connected 194 NHS Lanarkshire cases with travel to Blackpool and confirmed, at one point in the last fortnight, 20% of cases were linked to the seaside town.

'Powerful intervention'

It also notes that intensive care cases are "proportionately lower" than hospital cases, which currently sit at about 287.

The letter concludes: "While we agree that virus transmission and health analysis is the primary basis on which decisions should be considered, we do not believe the most up-to-date statistics support a move to Level 4."

Scottish Conservative Central Scotland MSP Graham Simpson said: "This is a powerful intervention from those on the frontline demanding that the SNP government does not railroad the local area into harsher restrictions than the evidence supports.

"The local NHS, police and council leaders are unanimous that Lanarkshire must be in tier 3."

During her daily media briefing, Ms Sturgeon said details of which areas will be in which level of the framework will be confirmed on Thursday.

She added: "We do not want to put any part of the country into level 4 if it is not absolutely necessary and while I can't say categorically, because I haven't done that final part of the process, I very much hope that tomorrow we will not be putting Lanarkshire into Level 4.

"Can I rule that out forever? Can I rule that out forever for any part of the country? No."

Work to finalise the decisions will take place with her cabinet over the course of Wednesday and include input from the government's clinical advisers as well as the ongoing consultations with local authorities.

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