

I remain committed to the closest possible co-operation, collaboration and alignment. And, let me stress again, I have no interest in politics when it comes to tackling this virus.

It is perfectly consistent with an overall four nations approach to have a pragmatic acceptance that we may move at different speeds if the evidence tells us that is necessary – and I believe we do now have that acceptance.

But genuine consultation and alignment of messages – even, perhaps especially, when the evidence is putting us on slightly different timelines – remains really important.

We should not be reading of each other's plans for the first time in newspapers.

And decisions that are being taken for one nation only – for good evidence based reasons – should not be presented as if they apply UK wide.

Clarity of message is paramount if we expect all of you to know exactly what it is we are asking of you. As leaders, we have a duty to deliver that clarity to those who we are accountable to, not confuse it.

To that end, I have asked the UK Government not to deploy their 'Stay Alert' advertising campaign in Scotland. Because the message in Scotland at this stage is not stay at home if you can, the message is, except for the essential reasons you know about, stay at home full stop.

Fundamentally, we all have a responsibility – and it is a heavy one for all of us – to make decisions and set policies for based on our own data of what is safe and what is not.

I am clear that for Scotland, at this present moment, relaxing too many restrictions too quickly creates the risk that the virus will take off again. I am not prepared to take that risk.

That is why – except for the fact that from tomorrow you can go out to exercise more than once a day – the current lockdown restrictions remain in place.

I very much hope that it will be possible to lift more of them in the days and weeks ahead – and we are making plans for that – but at the moment, the risks are still too great.

For all of us, in fact, the way in which we can emerge from lockdown that bit more quickly, is to stick with the current restrictions now.

It is easier for us to start leaving lockdown, the lower the R number is, and the fewer infectious cases there are.

So please, stay at home except for when you are buying food or medicines, or exercising.

Go for walks or runs more than once a day if you want to – it's good for your health and your physical and mental wellbeing. But stay more than two meters from other people when you are out, and do not meet up with people from other households.