

Glasgow Southside

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On 25 Jun 2020, at 14:41, SRIDHAR Devi <Devi.Sridhar@ed.ac.uk> wrote:

Dear Nicola,

Just following up to note that I'd be happy to chat anytime, if helpful to you. I know you are enormously busy so please don't worry if not.

I am happy to see the continual decline in cases. As long as Test and Protect stands up, I see no major issues with easing lockdown restrictions with appropriate safeguards. My main concern is imported cases when tourism gets going- and how to manage tourism from other parts of the UK, as well as from other parts of Europe such as Spain, Italy and France, as many other places have much higher incidence than Scotland. This definitely requires a closer look, and creativity on how to manage borders and use screening/testing/quarantine optimally.

With kind regards, Devi

On 19. Jun 2020, at 18:21, Nicola Sturgeon <Nicola.Sturgeon@snp.org> wrote:

Many thanks, Devi. I will read and consider over the weekend. It might be helpful for me to have a chat with you about it (and schools too) early next week if you have time? Also - and this is just for my interest - do you have an insight into what's going on in USA? Is the rise in cases in some States down to increased testing...or is it an actual rise in incidence? It looks very alarming. Hopefully speak to you next week.

In the meantime, have a good weekend

Best wishes

Nicola

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On 19 Jun 2020, at 16:13, SRIDHAR Devi <Devi.Sridhar@ed.ac.uk> wrote:

Dear First Minister

Please find attached a note drawn up by several colleagues and myself on how using existing capacity within Scotland, a major push for elimination could be made in July. Elimination being a continual push to zero infections in Scotland and elimination of any clusters emerging. This needs urgent attention.

I hope this is useful- there is a small window of time in the Summer to get things in place for the Fall. Could also mean kids going back to school full-time in August with limited distancing if all cases are being identified, traced and isolated. I am worried about increasing educational inequalities with private schools back to normal, and state schools only offering 1-2 days a week to children (who most need the schooling system).

Many thanks as always for reading.

With kind regards,

Devi

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Summer push towards elimination of COVID-19 in Scotland

Key messages

1. Scotland is now in a strong position to eliminate the COVID-19 virus. Elimination is the process of moving towards zero infections, and one where we expect to see future cases to be imported, but if these are identified quickly, traced and all exposed isolated, can facilitate a return to a largely 'normal' daily life for most.
2. The daily rate of new infections is low, transmission rates have been brought down to $R < 1$ and PCR testing capacity has been ramped up dramatically, to the extent that we currently have significant unused capacity.
3. This provides a short but crucial window of opportunity to push towards elimination of the virus over the summer months so that Scotland is in the best position possible before we enter autumn and the anticipated second northern hemisphere wave.
4. This would require an immediate and urgent change in strategy to start testing essential health and social care workers on a weekly basis as detailed below. We need to aggressively identify who has the virus and try to also isolate those who could be transmitting the virus in a pre-symptomatic phase.

The case for pushing towards elimination

1. This virus is too dangerous to let spread through a population unchecked; not only because of health services capacity, but also because of the morbidity it entails as well as the overall mortality.
2. We cannot stay in lockdown forever, or even until a vaccine is developed. We cannot expect people to shield indefinitely, nor have children denied access to education for any longer. Shops/restaurants/pubs need to open, social and economic activity needs to resume. 1m v. 2m misses the larger issue which is that most restaurants/pubs will not be financially viable at either, and children need to play and interact together closely. Society and the economy can only resume when the virus is no longer a lurking threat.
3. We need to find the 'least worst' path out of this. Complete lockdown is not possible, but test and protect will be stretched as soon as winter hits and flu symptoms rise which are the same as COVID symptoms. It is already hard for hospitals to discern where to place patients given speed of testing is too slow. The system might manage in the summer but will struggle in the autumn - and we need to avoid a second lockdown next winter.
4. More and more countries are trying to suppress the virus to a low level, and where possible, eliminate it; not only New Zealand, but also Australia, Thailand, Vietnam, Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Fiji, and other countries in E. Asia will follow.