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Coronavirus (COVID-19) update: First Minister's speech 5 October 2020

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Statement given by the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon at a media briefing in St Andrew's House, Edinburgh on Monday 5 October.

**This document is part of a collection**

Coronavirus update from the First Minister: 5 October 2020



Good afternoon everyone, thanks for joining us again today.

Let me give you the daily statistics as usual.

First of all, I can report that the total number of positive cases that were reported yesterday was 697.

Which is 12.8 % of people newly tested, and the total number of positive cases now is 32,906.

Two hundred and forty two of these cases are in Greater Glasgow and Clyde, 145 in Lothian, and 130 in Lanarkshire.

The remaining 180 cases are spread across 9 other health board areas.

I can also confirm that 218 people are in hospital – that is an increase of 8 since yesterday.

22 people are in intensive care now, which is the same number as yesterday.

And finally, in the past 24 hours, no deaths have been registered of patients who first tested positive over the previous 28 days. But since this is a Monday, I will give the usual caveat, registration offices tend to be closed on Sunday, so it is not entirely unexpected that no deaths were registered yesterday.

Since the last briefing we had on Friday though, four additional deaths have been registered. They have been reported in our daily figure since then.

That means that the total number of deaths, under the measurement we use on a daily basis, is now 2,530.

That total reminds us again that this virus can have a deadly impact. And of course I want to pass on my condolences again to everyone who has lost someone.

Over the weekend – and again today – we've reported quite significant numbers of new cases. That is obviously a cause for concern – and I am going to say a little bit more about that shortly.

I'll then hand over to the Health Secretary, who is going to say a few words about the seasonal flu vaccination programme.

Before that thought, there are a couple of brief updates I want to provide you with.

The first, actually, relates to an issue that you will have heard emerged last week in some of these daily updates – and regards parent and baby groups.

As you know, concerns were raised about the fact that the new restrictions limited attendance at these groups to just five adults, and it was felt that had a disproportionate impact on the ability of these groups to run. Therefore a disproportionate impact on the wellbeing and mental health of new mums in particular and babies.

I said last week that we would look again at this issue, and inform our consideration, as we always do by clinical advice. And I can confirm that we now done so and the guidance has been updated. We've now increased the number of adults that can attend parent and baby groups – so long as other health and safety criteria are met.

And in summary, if you are interested in this and if there are groups you attend you can find the full guidance on our website

In summary It means that, where the babies are under 12 months old, up to ten adults can now be present at any one time in these groups. Where children are over 12 months, we are still asking the maximum number of adults is five.

We know that parent and baby groups are vital in supporting health and wellbeing – particularly at the moment. But we also know that any setting where groups of adults come together poses a risk of transmission. So what we hope is that this change, while I'm sure not satisfying everybody, will strike a better balance between supporting the wellbeing of new parents – and in particular supporting perinatal mental health - while also making sure we are taking appropriate steps to try to stop the virus spreading.

My second update today is to draw attention to improvements in our presentation of COVID data.

And form a glance at social media last night, I see some of you have seen this new information and have already been making use of it.

Public Health Scotland has updated the dashboard that is published on its website. And it now provides additional COVID information, and it tries to provide all of the information in a more

accessible format.

For example, it now allows you to see additional data about the state of the pandemic, not just at a national Scotland wide level, but at a much more local level as well.

Up until now, the dashboard used local data to colour-code local authority areas based on the proportion of neighbourhoods that had a certain number of cases per 100,000, over a seven-day period.

But we know from information requests, that there is a desire, a very understandable desire, for people to have more localised information. So the updated dashboard provides that option.

By selecting your local authority, you can now click on the local area map to see case numbers within your neighbourhood – and a neighbourhood is typically an area with around 4,000 residents.

So it gives you access to more information about the number of cases and the level of infection, not just across your local authority, but actually in the neighbourhood you live in. And I think that, I hope, that will be useful for people in trying to assess risk as we move forward

Another new feature is a chart that shows the changing age profile of those testing positive. And at the moment that chart illustrates the trend that we've talked about in recent weeks – where we're seeing more young people testing positive, than we did at the start of the pandemic back in the spring .

However – and this is a very important point, and actually one of the key points in our consideration of next steps and the days to come - this chart also shows something that is concerning us, which is a rise now in transmission among older age group. And it underlines the fact that this resurgence of COVID as it is in many countries is affecting people, across the different age ranges.

So I would encourage anybody who is interested, to take a look at this new dashboard. I think it will help people to understand the course of the pandemic – not just across the country, but particularly in your local area and how it is affecting different demographics of the population .

Now, before I hand over to the Health Secretary, then she I and the Chief Medical Officer take questions, I want to return briefly to the large number of cases that we have seen reported over the weekend, and you know, the large number of cases that we have been seen reported over the last couple of weeks.

This is further evidence that in Scotland – as it is in many countries, right across the UK, Republic of Ireland and across Europe – COVID is on the rise again. As countries have come out of lockdown, and importantly as we enter the winter period.

And of course, we're seeing the consequences of that, not just in the daily case numbers, but also and perhaps more importantly, in the rise hospital admissions, in the numbers of people in intensive care, and sadly, in the number of people dying from the virus.

So all of that means that it is vital that we do everything we can to get this situation under control, of course in a proportionate way that allows us to take account of all of the different harms, not just that COVID can do but that our ways in dealing with COVID can also do.

The restrictions we announced a couple of weeks ago, particularly the request to everybody not to visit other people's houses right now is an attempt to get the virus under control and we are very hopeful that it will help us stem the increase of the virus over the next period.

But given the numbers we're seeing, we are, and I've been very open about this over the past few days, it is possible that we will have to do more. There may well be a need for some further restrictions in the near future. I can say that the government will be considering clinical evidence and advice later on today and the Cabinet will be considering the up to date situation when it meets tomorrow morning. If we do decide more restrictions are necessary, and no decision has been taken yet, I want to give an assurance that we will endeavour to give you the public, and of course the Scottish Parliament as much notice as possible as well as a clear explanation of our reasons and rationale, and I want to promise you that we do not impose restrictions lightly. If we decide that extra restrictions are necessary it will be because we deem it necessary and vital to get the virus back under control and avoid unnecessary loss of life.

But for now, pending any decisions that may be taken and communicated over the next few days, the best thing all of us can do to try to stop this resurgence and bring transmission back under control is comply with the current guidelines and rules that are in place. So as usual today, I want to end by reminding everybody of what they are.

As I mentioned a moment ago, and this is the toughest restriction at the moment, I know, but none of us should be visiting each other's homes right now – except, of course, for very specific purposes, if you need to care for a vulnerable relative or if you have childcare responsibilities.

When people are meeting outdoors, or in indoor public places, we are asking you to limit the size of the group that you're in to a maximum of six people and to ensure that those six people don't come from any more than two households. That's a key way of making sure that we limit transmission from one household to another.

And in addition, please work from home if it is possible for you to do so and download the Protect Scotland app, if you haven't already done so. It's an important way of making sure that anybody who is exposed to the virus gets quick notification of the need to self-isolate if that is appropriate, and it allows us to capture more people in that Test and Protect scheme than we would otherwise be able to do.

And finally, remember FACTS – the basic but really important rules that underpin our approach to tackling this virus right now.

- wear face coverings when you are out and about. The law says you have to do it in certain places like shops, public transport, but my advice would be to wear face coverings when you are out and about as often as you can.
- avoid crowded places whether they are indoor or outdoor crowded places.

- don't forget to clean hands and to clean hard surfaces that you or other people might be touching.
- two metre distance is what you should be seeking to keep from people in households other than your own.
- and of course self-isolate, and book a test straightaway, if you experience any of the symptoms of COVID which, to remind everybody, those symptoms we're asking you to be alert for are a fever, a new cough, or a loss of or change in your sense of taste or smell.

Keeping to these rules, I know, is tough. It requires all of us to be much more conscious of our everyday behaviour than we would normally be, and it's a massive inconvenience. I absolutely understand that, but right at this moment, it is more essential than it has been possibly at any time since before we went into lockdown back in March, that all of us are really vigilant and take all of these basic and, I know in some respects, quite difficult steps to stop this virus running away from us again. So please try to do all of this and, as I said earlier on, we will keep you informed if there are more steps that we feel that we need to take over the period to try to pull things back under control before we go deeper into winter.

Thank you very much for listening.

Was this helpful?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, but

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