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Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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COVID-19 – Framework for Decision Making

Scotland's route map through and out of the crisis

Phase 3 Update – 10 September 2020

Introduction

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Outline of key dates

We have come a long way since the coronavirus first arrived in Scotland at the end of last winter. After months of unprecedented restrictions, in which we have lost many lives to the disease and endured many broader harms and hardships, by the summer we had successfully suppressed the virus to a very low level. We had built a solid platform for economic and social recovery, in particular for the re-opening of our schools.

This was achieved through collective sacrifice and endeavour – by the fantastic work of our NHS, by our social care and broader public services, and by the way that people, businesses and third sector organisations adapted to the crisis and complied with the rules and restrictions required to protect ourselves and others.

We have progressed cautiously through the Route Map phases, taking care at every step to ensure it was safe to proceed. At times we have had to pause, and take a little longer to make progress, but we have now reached a point in Phase 3, where around 96% of our businesses are trading again, though many will be operating below full capacity, our children have returned to school and many social activities have been able to resume. But life is certainly not back to normal. The virus continues to pose a significant threat to public health. As a consequence, physical distancing and following the FACTS remain essential and some restrictions have been retained.

The latest data and analysis are telling us that we are now reaching or have reached the limit of what we can safely open up. Since the last review point on the 20th August there have been a number of important developments in the epidemic. Several of the key indicators in Scotland including confirmed COVID-related deaths, hospital admissions and use of intensive care units (ICU) have remained very low. However, confirmed positive case numbers have risen to an average of over 150 per day, having been at around 50 per day at the last review point, and having averaged around 10-20 a day for most of July.

Consistent with increasing infections, the reproduction (R) number is now likely to be above one (the latest published estimated range is 0.9-1.4). When the R number goes above one then this signals that the virus is likely to spread further and we have had to put in place additional restrictions in a number of local authorities, covering around a fifth of the population.

We expect that cases will continue to rise as we approach winter and that local outbreaks will continue to need to be managed through Test and Protect. If there is a high number of cases as we enter late autumn and winter we risk making the subsequent expansion of cases more rapid, as people spend more time socialising indoors which creates more opportunities for transmission.

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Outline of key dates

We also remain concerned that it will become harder to maintain compliance with ongoing restrictions, and to act where necessary in the future, if the UK Government withdraws the financial support available under the furlough scheme for employees who are unable to work. We continue to engage with the UK Government to encourage an extension to the scheme. We are also increasingly concerned that the requirement to self-isolate can be hard for those on low incomes or in uncertain work and we recognise that they need adequate financial support to enable them to self-isolate when they are required to. We have raised this issue with the UK Government and are exploring what options are available within our own limited resources, if the UK Government does not act.

In our current assessment of the status of the pandemic, we judge that we do not yet meet the criteria for progressing to Phase 4 of our Route Map, in which the virus will cease to be a significant threat to public health in Scotland. Beyond the planned changes to the restrictions noted in this publication, the Scottish Government considers that the remaining coronavirus regulations continue to be necessary to protect public health. Given that the current regulations are set to expire on 26 September 2020, the

Scottish Government considers it necessary to replace them with a new legislative instrument that will expire on 31 March 2021. Subject to the approval of Parliament, this new expiry date will align with other coronavirus legislation and ensure that no measures will expire automatically before it is appropriate for them to be eased.

Looking at developments elsewhere in the UK and internationally, the period since the 20th August review has seen significant increases in the number of infections. In Spain for example, since the end of July, positive cases per 100,000 rose from 34 to 127; in France they rose from 11 to 60; in Scotland they increased from 2 to 17.¹

Recent data from across the UK and Europe indicate that there has been a shift in the demographic of those infected to younger age groups, who are generally less seriously affected by the virus. Nevertheless, increased infections and prevalence among young people mean an expanded pool of infectious people that left unchecked will eventually spread to more vulnerable groups. Many other countries in Europe and beyond are now facing similar or worse challenges. Many are already re-imposing restrictions.

¹ Compares data for the week ending 4 Sep vs the week 25-31 July. Source: UK Government and ECDC for non-UK countries.

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Outline of key dates

The worse outlook in Europe than we had hoped for is a significant factor in our decision-making. High infection and prevalence rates in other countries matter as they increase the risk that the virus will find ways to spread from those countries into Scotland, as it did at the start of the crisis earlier in the year. This helps to explain why we have taken, along with our four nations partners, difficult but necessary decisions requiring people arriving in Scotland from a number of countries to quarantine for 14 days. This quarantine period will become increasingly important in the weeks ahead, as people travel from other parts of the world to begin their studies at universities in Scotland. Firm guidance has been put in place with universities to manage the arrival of international students, ensuring that we remain a welcoming country whilst protecting the health of students and society as a whole.

More generally, it remains essential that everyone follows the rules that have been put in place to protect ourselves and others. When people break these rules, they may not feel the direct effects themselves, but they may ultimately cause others, including loved ones, acquaintances and strangers, to fall gravely ill and even to die. We can only effectively control the virus if we collectively follow the rules.

This deteriorating situation at home and abroad means that we have to take a very cautious approach to the further easing of restrictions. As set out below, we now need to delay further changes until it is safe to make them. We also need to make some changes that will reduce opportunities for the virus to spread. We have already put a range of extra measures in place to help keep the virus suppressed, our Test & Protect system and outbreak management approach have worked well, and we are today introducing our proximity app, Protect Scotland, which will support our Test and Protect system, but more measures are now required.

At this review point we will take the following steps to further reduce transmission of the virus:

- The limit on the number of people who can meet socially indoors or outdoors will be reduced to a maximum of six people, and they should come from no more than two households. This applies in people's homes and gardens as well as in hospitality and public spaces such as parks. It is not required to count children under 12, from within the two households, within the 6 person limit. The regulations and guidance will be updated to reflect these changes. As before there will be certain limited exemptions to this limit - for example attendance at weddings and funerals. The changes to meeting socially do not apply to services or activities that are already

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Outline of key dates

exempt from these restrictions and have been permitted to open subject to their own guidance such as organised sport.

- Given the return of university and college students that has already begun, we will extend the house party offence provision that came into force on 28 August to include parties held within student accommodation. This will make it an offence to attend a party in student accommodation as it currently is in other forms of private dwelling. In doing so we will ensure that normal domestic activities carried out by students in their own accommodation are not inadvertently breaching the rules. This change is planned to come into effect on 14 September.
- Face coverings will be mandated for customers and staff in indoor hospitality. There will be an exemption for when customers are eating and drinking. Staff in non-public facing roles, such as kitchen staff, will also be exempt where face coverings may present health and safety issues due to the nature of roles. Exemptions for vulnerable groups/individuals will also apply to hospitality settings. Regulations will take effect on Monday 14 September.

Given the developing status of the epidemic – both in Scotland and internationally – we will also continue to take a cautious approach to any further opening up of economic or social activity. As was noted at the 20th August review when setting the 14th September indicative date:

It must be stressed that this indicative date is conditional on continued progress in suppressing the virus. If the epidemic in Scotland deteriorates before this date then the expectation must be that the date will be delayed.

Consistent with this, given the deterioration in the status of the epidemic over the past three weeks, those changes that were previously given an indicative date of 14 September will now be assigned a new indicative date of 5 October.

We know that the delay to re-opening stadia even to very limited numbers of sports fans will be disappointing to clubs and fans. To continue to prepare for the safe re-opening of stadia, we are permitting two pilot matches to take place this coming weekend. Working with the clubs and sports governing bodies, we will seek to learn the lessons from these pilots so that they can inform the safe re-opening of stadia for limited numbers of supporters, across all sports, when it is safe to do so.

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Outline of key dates

The piloting of other live events will be considered on a case by case basis, assessing each event against the status of the epidemic at the time it is due to go ahead and the safety procedures being put in place.

We continue to advise that, where possible, employers should continue to support employees to work from home, and people should work from home wherever possible. We understand the economic importance, particularly for urban centres, of allowing staff to return to those offices that remain closed. We also understand the benefit to health and well-being that such a return may bring for those workers who prefer to work in the office. However, we continue to weigh these benefits against the transmission risks inherent not just in the offices themselves, but also in transporting more people into urban centres, particularly given the limited capacity on our public transport network due to physical distancing requirements. We are working with partners including the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and the STUC to plan for a safe, phased re-opening of these remaining offices at an appropriate time. That planning will inform future Route Map review decisions which will as ever be set in the broader context of progress in tackling the epidemic in Scotland.

We have also listened attentively to the many views that have been expressed in support of increasing the numbers of people permitted to attend funerals, weddings and civil partnerships. A limit of 20 people applies to weddings, civil partnerships, and funerals. A limit of 20 people will also now apply to receptions or wakes where they are held in a regulated environment.

While we understand the frustration and harm caused by ongoing restrictions and that many people would like them to be relaxed further, the way to help those settings and activities that are still restricted is not by allowing them to open too soon. That could cause infections to increase further and require restrictions to be re-imposed not only on those same settings and activities but also on others that could otherwise have remained open. That would be in no-one's interest.

By continuing to follow a cautious approach with a focus on suppressing the virus to very low levels, we will continue to lay the foundations for sustainable recovery and reduce the risk of a nationwide resurgence of the virus. This will enable as much of our economy and broader society to function as is safe given our progress on tackling the epidemic. It will help our country to be in the best position as we wait for the pressures of winter and for positive developments in terms treatments and vaccines.

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Outline of key dates

To succeed, we must all remain in this together. We have learned a great deal about this virus: how it spreads, where it is most likely to spread and how to protect ourselves, but our principal defence against it remains human behaviour. Other measures like Test & Protect and wider mitigations can help and must be deployed to maximum effect but ultimately it is what we all do that matters most. It is the sum of our individual actions – our compliance with the rules designed to protect ourselves and others, our collective endeavour – that has enabled the progress we have seen to date and that will determine our path through the crisis to recovery and renewal.

Scottish Government
10 September 2020

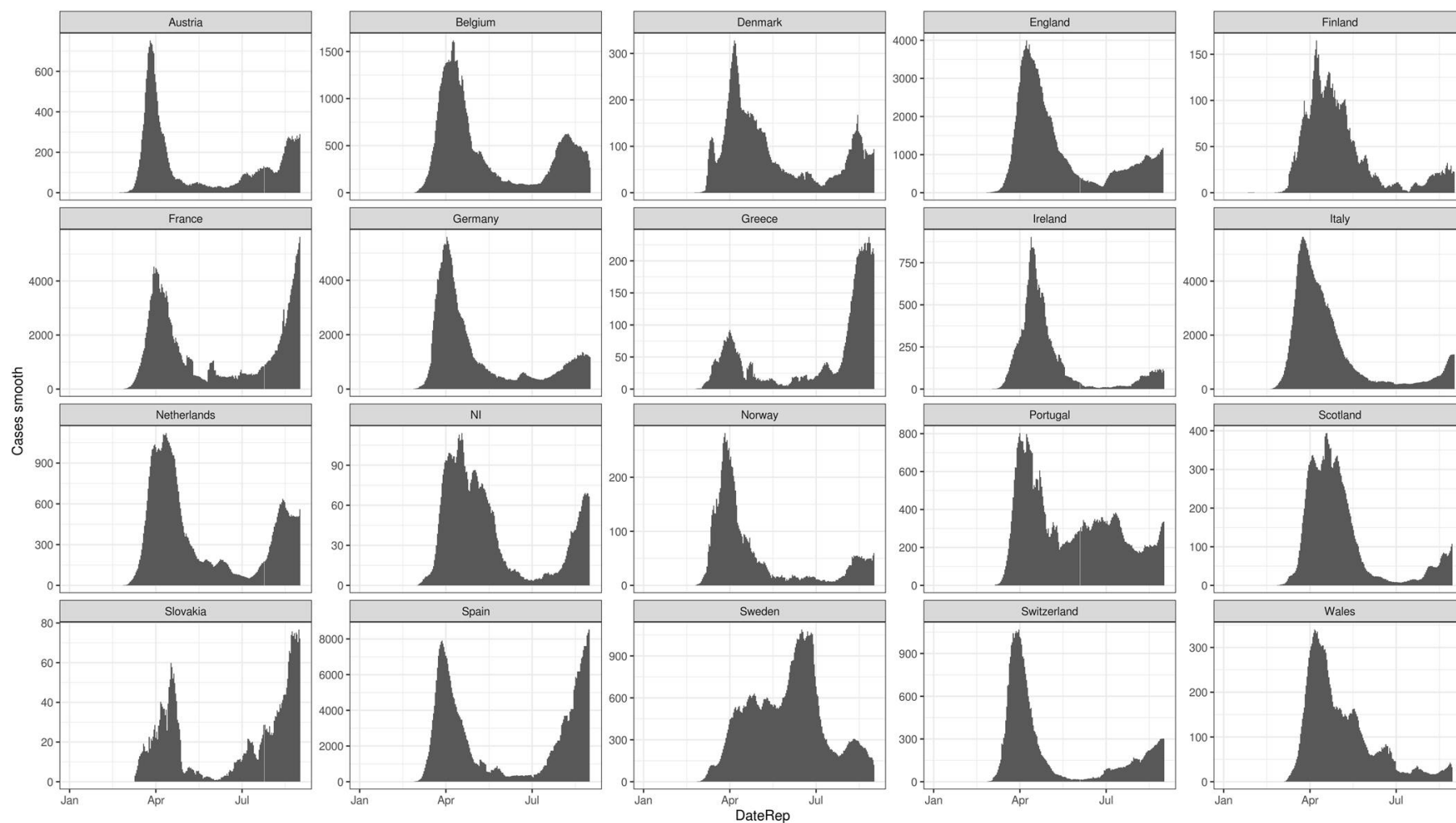
Remember **FACTS** for a safer Scotland

F	Face coverings	
A	Avoid crowded places	
C	Clean your hands regularly	
T	Two metre distance	
S	Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms	

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Figure 1:
Covid-19 cases



Sources:

ECDC for non UK countries: <https://opendata.ecdc.europa.eu/covid19/casedistribution/csv>

England: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

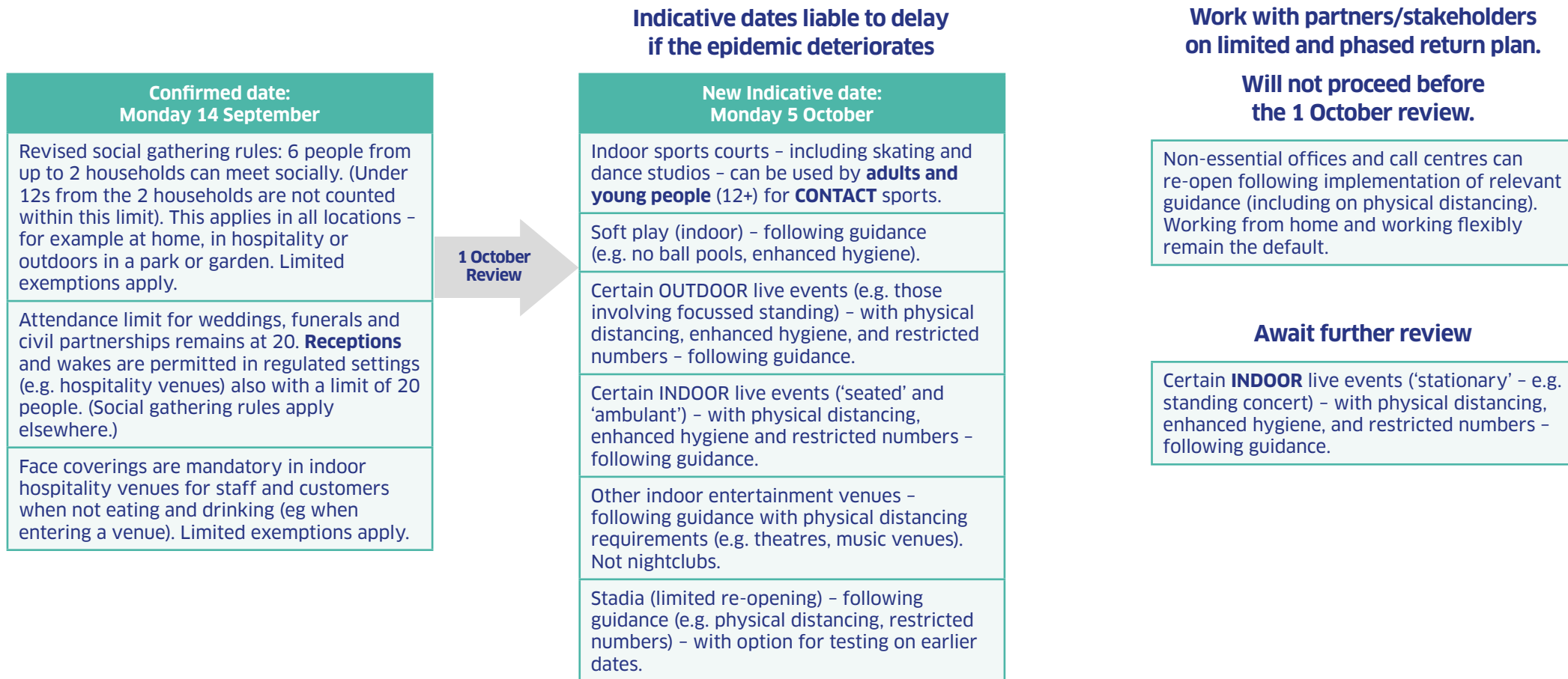
Scotland: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/general-publications/weekly-and-monthly-data-on-births-and-deaths/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland>

Wales: <https://public.tableau.com/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection#!/vizhome/RapidCOVID-19virologyPublic/Headlinesummary>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/daily-dashboard-updates-covid-19-august-2020>

Remaining Phase 3 changes. Not all details are shown. Please refer to guidance and Q&A for more detail.

Relevant guidance and public health advice (such as physical distancing rules and restricted numbers) will apply to the changes shown.



Outline of key dates

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Outline of key dates

Note: all of the following changes are subject to relevant public health guidance.

The following have a confirmed date of Monday 14 September:

- Revised social gathering rules: 6 people from up to 2 households can meet socially. (Under 12s from the 2 households are not counted within this limit). This applies in all locations – for example at home, in hospitality or outdoors in a park or garden. Limited exemptions apply.
- Attendance limit for weddings, funerals and civil partnerships remains at 20. **Receptions** and wakes are permitted in regulated settings (e.g. hospitality venues) also with a limit of 20 people. (Social gathering rules apply elsewhere.)
- Face coverings are mandatory in indoor hospitality venues for staff and customers when not eating and drinking (e.g. when entering a venue). Limited exemptions apply.

The following changes, previously given an indicative date of Monday 14 September, now have a revised indicative date of Monday 5 October:

- Indoor sports courts – including skating and dance studios – can be used by **adults** and **young people** (12+) for **contact** sports.
- Indoor soft play can re-open – following guidance (e.g. no ball pools, enhanced hygiene).
- Certain **outdoor** live events (e.g. those involving focussed standing) – with physical distancing, enhanced hygiene, and restricted numbers – following guidance.
- Certain **indoor** live events (seated and ambulant) – with physical distancing, enhanced hygiene and restricted numbers – following guidance.
- Other indoor entertainment venues – following guidance with physical distancing requirements (e.g. theatres, music venues). Not nightclubs.
- Stadia – limited re-opening – following guidance (e.g. physical distancing, restricted numbers) – with option for testing on earlier dates.

- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Outline of key dates

The following is subject to work with partners/ stakeholders on a limited and phased return plan. Will not proceed before 1 October review.

- Non-essential offices and call centres can re-open following implementation of relevant guidance (including on physical distancing). Working from home and working flexibly remain the default.

The following must await further review

- Certain **indoor** live events ('stationary' e.g. standing live concerts) – with physical distancing, enhanced hygiene, and restricted numbers – following guidance. Work will be undertaken with the sector on options for pilot events.

Scaling up of public services

During Phase 3, a range of public services will continue to safely re-open and expand.

Public transport is scaling up to full services during Phase 3 with a move to 1 metre physical distancing, subject to appropriate risk mitigations, releasing further capacity in vehicles and vessels.

Scaling-up health and social care across Phase 3

Services will continue to scale up in line with NHS remobilisation plans.

Measuring the impact of changes

The *Equality and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment (EQFSIA)* covering the Route Map is published and will be updated as we progress through the remaining Phases. We will publish other relevant impact assessments in due course.



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