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Donald Cameron MSP
Convener
COVID-19 Committee

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10 September 2020

Dear Donald,

OUTCOME OF STATUTORY REVIEW AND SCOTLAND'S ROUTE MAP UPDATE

I am writing to inform you that the Scottish Government has concluded the review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 and guidance which underpin the current lockdown. We remain of the view that it is likely that we will remain within Phase 3 of *Scotland's Route Map* for some time to come. Furthermore, the Scottish Government considers that the remaining coronavirus regulations continue to be necessary and proportionate 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.

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

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- 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 settings or activities. Those changes that were previously given an indicative date, of 14 September which was conditional on the status of the epidemic, will now be assigned a new indicative date of 5 October. A final decision on these will be taken nearer the time. Further details have been published on the [Scottish Government website](#).

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 of treatments and vaccines.

In accordance with the requirements of the regulations we will review them again within 21 days and will inform Parliament of the outcome of that review. As the First Minister has indicated, if there are any changed circumstances that would permit earlier action we will of course notify the committee at the earliest possible moment.

This letter has been copied to the Conveners of the Health and Sport and Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committees.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Russell

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