

# **Tell us what you think about the Covid Recovery Bill**

**Easy Read**

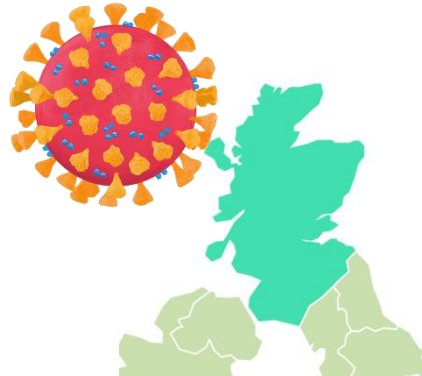
**October 2021**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

# Scottish Government

## Tell us what you think about the Covid Recovery Bill



**Questions**

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1. What do you think about it?

☐ Good

☐ Bad

☒ Not sure

# What is a consultation?



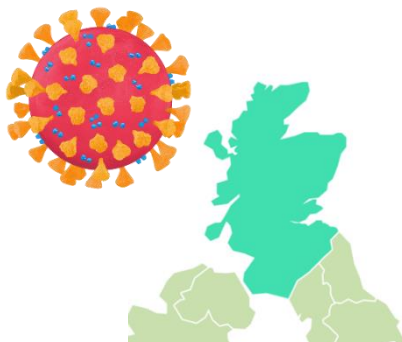
The law says the Scottish Government must ask people for their views before important changes are made.

This is called a consultation.



The Scottish Government wants to know what you think about Covid recovery and changes to the law.

Covid recovery is the way the Scottish Government deals with inequalities the pandemic has made worse.



Inequality means people do not have the same choices and chances.

A pandemic is an infectious disease that has spread across the world.



The Scottish Government published [a plan](#) for Covid recovery in October 2021 to make sure that public services make things better for people who have been affected.



The Scottish Government has powers set out in law.

This means it can change laws or make new ones.



In the pandemic the Scottish and UK Governments made temporary laws to keep the public safe.

Temporary means they will only last for a limited time.



Some of these temporary laws have allowed people to get services in an easier way than before the pandemic.

Some of these temporary laws will end next year.



The Scottish Government wants to take away laws that are not needed.

It wants to keep laws that have been helpful for Scotland.

The Scottish Government thinks:

- some of these laws should be made permanent.

Permanent means the laws would not have a date when they would end.

They would last until the Scottish Parliament decides they should end or be changed.



- some of these laws should be extended because they are part of Covid recovery in the justice system.

The justice system is things like the police, courts and prison.



Extended means the laws would be temporary for a longer time.



The Scottish Government is having a consultation to ask people what they think about these laws.

The consultation lasts for 12 weeks.



The Scottish Government will have a consultation event with Disability Equality Scotland to hear what disabled people think and how the laws might affect them.



This document is a short version of laws that the Scottish Government and Disability Organisations think could affect disabled people the most.

It is based on the full consultation paper which is on the [Scottish Government website](#).

There are 4 themes.

## Theme 1 – Public Health



During the Covid pandemic the Scottish Government has had some powers to protect the health of people in Scotland.



The Scottish Government think these laws should be made permanent.

This would allow them to work quickly if there is another infectious disease or health emergency in the future.





## Education

Places like schools, colleges and childcare have been affected a lot by the pandemic.



The Scottish Government has temporary powers to close places like schools and colleges to control the spread of Covid.



The Scottish Government also has temporary powers to make sure education can continue for children and young people in a way that is safe.



## People's health

Powers were used to protect the health of people in Scotland and stop Covid spreading.



This was things like:

- limiting the number of people that can meet.



- lockdowns when we had to stay at home.
- and making sure people wear face coverings.



These powers are already permanent in England and Wales.



## Vaccinations

Before the pandemic the law said that vaccinations had to be given by doctors or staff that doctors are in charge of.



The UK Government temporarily changed this law so that more health staff could give vaccinations.

## Theme 2 – Online Meetings and Hearings



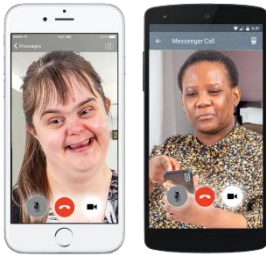
A hearing is a formal meeting where a court, tribunal or council or government committee makes a decision.

A tribunal is a meeting to settle a disagreement about an issue with the law like a housing issue.





Before the pandemic some laws said some meetings and hearings had to take place in person.



To reduce the spread of Covid the Government temporarily changed these laws so some meetings and hearings could be held online on a computer or smartphone.



The Scottish Government thinks some of these laws should be made permanent and some of these laws should be extended.



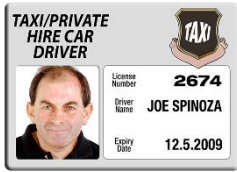
This would mean:

- more people could take part in these meetings and hearings because they would not need to travel far.
- people would not need to meet in person if there was a public health emergency in the future.



Examples of meetings and hearings that could be held online (permanent):

- public meetings about changes in schools.



- hearings about getting a license to do certain things like selling alcohol or having a taxi service.



- meetings about bankruptcy.

Bankruptcy can be a way for someone to deal with their debts they cannot pay, or for someone to get money they are owed.



- meetings about legal documents.



- hearings to decide if prisoners can be released from jail.



Examples of meetings and hearings that could be held online (extended):

- court and tribunal hearings.



People would still be able to attend meetings and hearings in person but could do this online if that would be easier.

## Theme 3 - Communicating by phone or online



Before the pandemic the law said many important documents and pieces of information had to be sent through the post or given to somebody in person.



In the pandemic the Scottish Government changed this so information could be shared online or over the phone.



The Scottish Government thinks some of these laws should be made permanent and some of these laws should be extended.

This would make services more modern and quicker.



Examples of information that could be shared electronically (permanent):

- documents about bankruptcy.
- notices from the Care Inspectorate.
- some court documents.



Examples of information that could be shared electronically (extended):

- signed documents for courts and tribunals.



Examples of information that could be shared over the phone (permanent):

- registration of births and deaths.



People would still be able to share information through the post or in person but could send it online or make a phone call if that would be easier.

## Theme 4 – Protection from eviction



In this theme the Tribunal is a group of people who make decisions about housing and property in the private sector.

They do not make decisions about social housing.



A private landlord is a person who rents a property to a person called a private tenant.

In this theme they will simply be called 'landlord' and 'tenant'.



Before the Covid pandemic landlords could ask the Tribunal to agree that someone could be evicted for one reason.

Evicted means the tenant must leave the property.



If the reason for ending the tenancy was rent arrears the Tribunal usually had to agree to the eviction.

Rent arrears is when a tenant has not paid their rent to their landlord.



In the pandemic the Scottish Government introduced temporary laws to protect tenants from eviction in 2 ways:





1. The Tribunal can look at all the information in a case and not just one reason before they decide if a tenant can be evicted.



2. Landlords must work with a tenant in rent arrears before asking the Tribunal to agree to an eviction.

This could mean agreeing how rent arrears can be paid back.



The Scottish Government thinks the law about landlords working with tenants in rent arrears should be made permanent.

This would make sure tenants can be protected as much as possible.



The Scottish Government also wants to know what you think about the Tribunal looking at all the information in an eviction case for any reason.



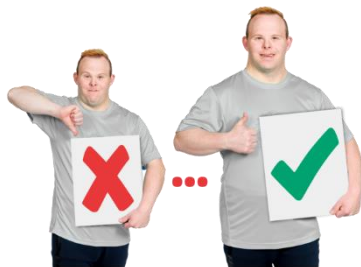
## And finally...



The Disability Consultation Event will let you speak with people who work for the Scottish Government.

They want to:

- know how these laws might affect disabled people.
- hear if you have experience of these laws.
- listen to any worries you have about the laws and how they could work to make this better.



The Scottish Government will think about what you have said before making any important changes.



The Scottish Government looks forward to speaking with you at the event.



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