



COVID-19

Scotland's Strategic Framework Summary



October 2020

Our Strategic Approach:

We will work determinedly, energetically, and collaboratively to **suppress the virus to the lowest possible level** and keep it there, while we strive to return to a more normal life for as many people as possible.

Tackling the four harms of the virus

The pandemic is a global health crisis, but with devastating wider impacts. Our ability to control the virus requires us to restrict economic activity to minimise transmission risks, and protect lives and the NHS. To suppress the virus, while protecting people, our society, and our economy, we will take coordinated action to tackle the four harms of COVID-19:

<p>Suppress the virus, protecting against the direct and tragic harm to your health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce new protection levels, providing graduated protections locally and/or nationally.• Expand our testing capacity, using it fully to care for those at the greatest risk.• Make further improvements to Test and Protect, and ensure people are supported to self-isolate.• Review our advice and guidance, and how we provide that, to ensure people can do the right thing.• Support our care homes to take action.	<p>Support broader health, protecting our health and social care services, and your health and wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put in place strong winter preparedness plans for both health and social care.• Continue to invest in NHS remobilisation, opening up services where safe and possible, while securing capacity to deal with any surge in the virus.• Introduce new support and advice for those at the greatest clinical risk, including people shielding.
<p>Mitigate social harms, protecting against broader harms to your way of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take forward a range of actions to tackle existing inequalities, and protect people on low incomes.• Provide a range of services to support people's mental health and wellbeing.• Prioritise keeping schools and regulated childcare open, taking steps to protect children, young people, and staff.	<p>Support the economy, protecting against the devastating impact for business.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a bespoke package of support to help business through any protective public health measures.• Continue to press the UK Government to ensure a sufficient four nations approach which provides the necessary funding for Scottish businesses and workers.• Work alongside businesses and trades unions to ensure COVID safe premises, protecting workers and keeping premises open where we can.

Protection levels approach

To best tackle the virus, and protect people, we will move to a strategic approach to outbreak management based on five levels of protection.

While it is important to always retain some flexibility, this will provide a more transparent and easily understood framework for managing outbreaks and allow rapid but proportionate responses to be taken – locally or nationally – using a range of measures and options.

A levels approach also allows us to respond on a national basis if required, but also to avoid a ‘one size fits all’ approach if it is not. It will mean that one part of the country with low rates of infection does not have to live with the level of protective measures designed to suppress the virus in areas with much higher rates.

The table below shows the broad measures people can expect to be in place – however, it is important to note that decisions will build as far as possible on existing structures and processes, allow for good engagement with local leadership, and will be based on the four harms evidence.

The five protection levels consist of four levels above the Route Map Phase 3 baseline (or ‘Level 0’). They are designed to achieve progressively stronger effects in suppressing the virus. It is possible to move up and down.

Level	What you can expect
Level 0 (baseline) and Level 1	Within these levels, we would expect to see low incidence of the virus with isolated clusters, and low community transmission. Broadly, these levels are the closest we can get to normality, without a vaccine or effective treatment in place, before conditions will allow us to move to Phase 4 of the Route Map. They would be similar to the measures in place during the summer, once we reached Phase 3. The Baseline and Level 1 are designed to be sustainable for longer periods.
Levels 2-3	Within Levels 2 and 3, we would expect to see increased incidence of the virus, with multiple clusters and increased community transmission. There would be a graduated series of protective measures to tackle the virus, focusing on key areas of risk – broadly, indoor settings where household mixing takes place with less, or less well-observed, physical distancing and mitigations. The measures would be intended to be in place for relatively short periods (2-4 weeks), and only for as long as required to get the virus down to a low, sustainable level.
Level 4	Within this level we would expect to see very high or rapidly increasing incidence, and widespread community transmission which may pose a threat to the NHS to cope. It is likely that this level would see the introduction of measures close to a return to full lockdown. Measures would be designed to be in place for a short period, to provide a short, sharp response to quickly suppress the virus.

A collective endeavour

We know the difficulty and frustration that can inevitably come with further protective measures – but those short-term sacrifices will help ensure long-term prosperity. By complying with the necessary protective measures, taking care of ourselves and looking out for each other, we hope to return to more normality sooner. That requires trust, and support, so our offer in return is:

- We will support people to comply with the necessary protective measures – providing clear advice and guidance, being open and transparent about what we're asking and why, and offering the necessary support for self-isolation

- We will keep any protective measures under regular review – ensuring we minimise their use and time in force, to suppress the virus to the necessary level
- We will provide, as far as possible and with the resources available to us, support to businesses and individuals – to keep them safe, and to keep as much of society open as we can

While this framework sets out a refreshed, strategic approach to the crisis, at an individual level, we should always remember the most simple but important advice: **FACTS**

