**COVID-19: FIRST MINISTER STATEMENT TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT – 7TH OCTOBER 2020**

**CONTEXT**

* In a statement to MSPs, the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced new restrictions to stem the flow of Covid-19 amidst a backdrop of rising infections in Scotland, with more than 1,000 cases recorded in the past 24 hours.
* The First Minister reiterated that Scotland was not entering into another lockdown but was instead taking a series of targeted and temporary measures to tackle the rise in Covid-19.
* The Scottish Government **published an evidence paper from its senior clinical advisers** summing up evidence on infection trends, confirmed cases, hospital use and deaths, and how these vary across Scotland. This underpins the rationale behind the changes.

**KEY POINTS: NEW MEASURES**

* The Scottish Government are taking a **targeted and time-limited approach**, with the First Minister arguing that *“it is by taking the tough action now, that we hope to avoid even tougher action in future.”*
* There will be **nationwide restrictions across Scotland** **but also stricter targeted restrictions for some areas**because of the significantly higher rate of infection in the Central Belt.
* Stricter restrictions will be put in place in the following five health board areas**: Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Arran, Lothian and Forth Valley (hereby referred to as the ‘Central Belt’).**
* She added that the complexity of the restrictions was a result of trying to target measures specifically at the Central Belt: *"You can be simple and hard [for everyone], or a bit more targeted and accept the result of that is a bit more complexity."*

**HOSPITALITY**
The new rules below come into force at **6pm this Friday** and will be in place until **25 October**inclusive and are intended as a *“short, sharp action to arrest a worrying increase in infection.”*

**Nationwide restrictions:**

* With the exception of the Central Belt, **pubs, bars, restaurants and cafes will be able to operate indoors on the following restricted basis**: from 6am to 6pm, for the service of food and non-alcoholic drinks only. Hotel restaurants will be able to operate beyond 6pm, but only for residents and without alcohol.
* With the exception of the Central Belt, **bars, pubs, restaurants and cafes can continue to serve alcohol outdoors up to the existing curfew time of 10pm**.
* There will be an **exemption to these rules** – for all parts of Scotland – for celebrations associated with specific life events like weddings that are already booked and funerals. The current rules for those will continue to apply.

**Targeted Restrictions at Central Belt:**

* **All licensed premises – with the exception of hotels for residents – will be required to close indoors and outdoors**, though takeaways will be permitted.
* **Cafes which do not have an alcohol license will be able to stay open until 6pm** to support social isolation
* Snooker and pool halls, indoor bowling alleys, casinos and bingo halls will close for two weeks from 10 October.

**Financial Support:**

* There will be a **£40m package of funding for businesses affected**. More details will follow and the First Minister mentioned a *“consultation”* with businesses on priorities.

**TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS**

* **Holiday accommodation will remain open** and there will be **no mandatory travel restrictions**.
* The First Minister stated that *“we are not insisting that people cancel any half term breaks they have planned.”*
* However, those residing in the Central Belt should avoid public transport *“unless it is absolutely necessary”*.
* Moreover, those in the Central Belt are *advised* not to travel outside their local area and others are similarly advised not to visit they *“unless they need to.”*

**OTHER MEASURES**

* The Scottish Government will introduce regulations to extend further the mandatory use of face coverings in indoor communal settings – this will include, for example, staff canteens and corridors in workplaces.
* They will also take action to strengthen compliance with the different strands of the FACTS advice, focusing particularly on areas from research that has shown that compliance is not yet high enough (i.e. the need to self-isolate).
* For retail premises, they are asking shops to return to 2m physical distancing and reintroduce the mitigations they put in place earlier in the pandemic, for example, one-way systems.