Twitter Thread by The SNP



The SNP
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First Minister @NicolaSturgeon: "Good afternoon, and thanks for joining us today. I've got quite a lot to cover in my opening remarks today so please bear with me, but it's all by way of important and, I hope, useful update to you."

NS: "First of all, to today's statistics. The total number of positive cases reported yesterday was 2,649."

NS: "That is 11.3% of the total number of tests carried out, and the total number of confirmed cases is now 143,715."

NS: "660 of the new cases are in Greater Glasgow and Clyde, 389 in Lanarkshire, 357 in Lothian and 302 in Tayside. The remaining cases are across 9 other health board areas."

NS: "I can also confirm that 1,467 people are currently in hospital. That is an increase of 83 from yesterday."

NS: "Now. this number pretty closely now matches the numbers that were in hospital at the peak of the first wave back in April. 100 people are in intensive care, which is 5 more than yesterday."

NS: "The intensive care number is still well below the peak that we saw back in April, but nevertheless I want to stress that pressure on our ICU units is increasing..."

NS: "..and total intensive care occupancy, which will be Covid and non-Covid patients in intensive care, is now above normal capacity across the country."

NS: "Both of these figures really do underline why it is so important now that all of us do our part in stopping this virus spreading so that we, amongst other things of course, contribute to a situation where that pressure on our hospitals is not continuing to increase."

NS: "I can also confirm, unfortunately, that 78 additional deaths have been registered in the past 24 hours of patients who first tested positive in the previous 28 days, and the total number of deaths under the daily measurements we use is now 4,779."

NS: "National Records of Scotland has also just published its weekly update, and that, as you will recall, includes cases where Covid hasn't been confirmed through a test but is suspected or a contributory cause of death."

NS: "Today's update shows that, by Sunday just past, the total number of registered deaths linked to Covid under the wider definition was 6,686. 183 of these were registered last week, which is 17 fewer than in the previous week."

NS: "Of those 183 deaths, 111 occurred in hospitals, 63 in care homes, and 9 at home or in another non-institutional setting."

NS: "Of course, every single one of these deaths which I report every day here as statistics represents a human being who was loved by their family and friends..."

NS: "..and they serve as a reminder of the toll this virus is taking, and the heartbreak it is causing far too many families across the country."

NS: "So again today, to each and every one of you who might be grieving right now, my condolences and thoughts are very much with you."

NS: "The Scottish Government will also later today publish the latest estimate for the R number. That will show that the R number undoubtedly remains above 1..."

NS: "..although that estimate can't take full account of any changes that might have happened as a result of the new restrictions we've introduced this week - although it is probably too early for those changes to have resulted in any change to these statistics."

NS: "There are three other points that I want to update on today. The first is that Public Health Scotland has just published its weekly statistical update, and that includes, amongst other things, details of the progress of our vaccination programme to date."

NS: "I can confirm that this shows that, by Sunday 3rd January, 113,459 individuals had received their first dose of the Pfizer Covid vaccine."

NS: "We started using the AstraZeneca vaccine on Monday, and so next week's figures will include people who have received that vaccine."

NS: "There are a few further points about the vaccination programme that I just want to expand on today to try to give you as much as I can of how the programme is progressing."

NS: "Now, in weeks to come, Public Health Scotland intends to provide a much more detailed breakdown - by group of the population and also by region of Scotland - of who has been vaccinated."

NS: "But I'm able to confirm today that we're now well over halfway through vaccinating care home residents with their first dose of the vaccine."

NS: "That is extremely important. As you've just heard, more than a third of the people who died with Covid last week died in our care homes..."

NS: "..and we very much hope that the vaccine will very soon start to significantly reduce the risk of care home residents becoming ill with the virus."

NS: "In addition, the programme for vaccinating all people over the age of 80 is underway. All over 80 year olds will be starting now to get appointments, either by phone or by letter, but I want to say today, don't worry if you haven't yet had your call or your letter."

NS: "These are being aligned with availability of supply, and it will be coming to you soon. We are aiming to have all over-80s receive the first dose of the vaccine over the next four weeks."

NS: "So if you're over 80 and you've not yet received a letter or a phone call, there's no need for you to phone up your GP. You will be contacted with an appointment as soon as possible and you will get your vaccination over the next four-week period."

NS: "The final point I want to make is that, from next week, to support all of this, I can confirm that more than 1,100 vaccination sites will be operational across Scotland. These sites will mainly be GP practices and community vaccination centres at this stage."

NS: "The number of vaccination sites will continue to grow as our supplies of the vaccines increase and as pharmacies and mass vaccination centres start being used to provide the vaccine."

NS: "But from next week, more than 1,100 sites will be active and operational in getting this vaccine into people's arms."

NS: "Now, we will keep you updated on the progress of the vaccination programme as we go along, and as part of that I can confirm today that we have decided that from Monday next week we will publish statistics every week day on the total number of people vaccinated..."

NS: "..which will help people see, on an ongoing basis, the progress that the programme is making."

NS: "The weekly Public Health Scotland report will also, as I indicated earlier on, as soon as possible give more detailed breakdowns of the numbers vaccinated in each group, and each part of the country."

NS: "However, I hope that today's initial information provides some assurance that the vaccination programme is already starting to protect a significant proportion of the people who are most vulnerable to Covid, particularly those in our care homes..."

NS: "..and that the programme will grow rapidly in scale in the coming days and weeks."

NS: "Vaccination, ultimately, is what will provide us with the route out of this pandemic, and so we are absolutely determined to ensure as many people as possible are vaccinated just as quickly as it is possible to do so."

NS: "Now, the second issue I want to update on today relates to temporary regulations to protect people from the risk of being evicted from their homes during the pandemic."

NS: "Early on in the pandemic the Scottish Government acted to prevent evictions by extending the notice period required for action. But last month we introduced legislation to prevent eviction notices from being enforced at all, with only some very limited exceptions."

NS: "These regulations are in place until Friday 22nd January. They were originally intended as a temporary action to protect public health by ensuring evictions couldn't take place over the Christmas and New Year period."

NS: "Since those regulations were introduced, we've seen a major increase in new cases, and a new variant that is gaining ground rapidly."

NS: "That means, if anything, there is now an even greater public health need to prevent evictions than there was even back in December."

NS: "It's become even more important to stop people from finding a new home or perhaps to move in with a different household."

NS: "For that reason, the regulations to prevent the enforcement of evictions notices will be extended until the 31st of March in all level 3 and level 4 areas, which of course, right now, is the whole of Scotland."

NS: "If necessary, the legislation can be extended further after that date. We will review that position as we get closer to 31st March."

NS: "As is currently the case, there will continue to be limited exceptions in these regulations, for example, it may still be possible to evict someone if they are guilty of antisocial behaviour or other criminal behaviour."

NS: "Overall though, these regulations should stop the vast majority of eviction notices from being served."

NS: "That will help us protect public health, by helping people to stay in the same household, and also, I hope, provide reassurance for tenants living in private or social rented housing."

NS: "The final point I want to make today is to emphasise again our key public health guidance. As part of that I want to stress today in particular the importance of everybody working from home as much, and as far, as they possibly can."

NS: "Working from home, if it's possible to do so, is now a legal requirement in almost all parts of Scotland, and that includes the mainland of Scotland."

NS: "Many businesses have already shown great flexibility in enabling their workers to work from home, and I'm grateful to them for that. But I want to stress again the need for all companies to do so as much as they possibly can."

NS: "All employers should be reviewing their operations to allow as many people to work from home as possible."

NS: "In particular, they should only be asking people to come into work if it is for work that cannot possibly be done from home, and if it is for work that is genuinely essential."

NS: "That also applies - this is a point I want to stress too - to takeaway businesses and to nonessential shops that are providing click & collect services."

NS: "If you can provide delivery services instead, you should do that, and that will reduce the need for people to leave their homes and help all of us to fight this virus more effectively."

NS: "The bottom line here - and I need to be really blunt about this - is that, for this lockdown to be as effective as we really need it to be, we must radically reduce the number of interactions we are having..."

NS: "..and that means reducing to a minimum the reasons why people are required to leave their homes."

NS: "Now, if we need to require more non-essential activity to close in order to achieve this, we will have to do that. And that's a matter of ongoing review by the Scottish Government right now."

NS: "However, businesses can help now by limiting, as far as possible, the number of workers that they are asking to leave their homes - and I am asking them again to do so."

NS: "Although there is an important role for employers here, and a particularly important role for government in all of this, reducing the risk of transmission is also a responsibility for all of us as individuals, and this is the point I want to conclude on."

NS: "Each of us needs to play our part right now in slowing down the spread of this virus and reducing the number of people who get effective, while the vaccination programme starts to have an impact."

NS: "Remember, that race analogy that I used the other day. We need to speed up the vaccine but we also need to slow down the virus, and that is up to each and every one of us."

NS: "And the best way to do that is to stick to these lockdown rules, stay at home as much as possible."

NS: "Only leave your house for genuinely essential services such as caring responsibilities, essential shopping, or exercise."

NS: "Work from home if you possibly can, and please, do not go inside other people's houses unless it is for an essential purpose like caring for someone who is vulnerable."

NS: "And remember that the rule for meeting people outdoors now allows just two people from two households to get together."

NS: "Finally, if you are out and about, please continue to remember and abide by FACTS."

NS: "Wear face coverings when you're out and about, for example, during essential shopping. Avoid anywhere that is busy. Clean your hands and hard surfaces. Use two-metre distancing when you are talking to someone from another household, even outdoors."

NS: "And self-isolate, and book a test, if you have symptoms."

NS: "On any occasion when we do require to be outside our own homes, these measures still help us to break the chains of transmission."

NS: "But fundamentally, although it is incredibly difficult, the best way we have of protecting ourselves right now is to go out as little as possible."

NS: "Staying at home is how we stay safe, it's how we protect ourselves and our loved ones, and it's how we slow down this virus while we speed up vaccinations."

NS: "Last point is this. Staying at home is also how all of us help our National Health Service do the incredibly difficult job it has on its hands right now."

NS: "Our NHS is coping, but as you saw from the statistics I reported earlier on, it is under severe and increasing pressure."

NS: "Every single person who gets infected with this virus is somebody who might need hospital care in future. So the more all of us stay at home and reduce the opportunities for the virus to spread, the more all of us help the NHS cope."

NS: "I saw talk yesterday of restarting the weekly clap for the NHS - although expanding it to include others who are contributing so much right now."

NS: "Let me be clear, in mentioning this, don't take from it that I'm in any way against that. Everything we can do to show appreciation for those working so hard on our behalf is important."

NS: "But I strongly suspect that what most NHS frontline workers really want from the public is for all of us to do everything we can to stop the virus spreading."

NS: "So please, I'm asking everybody - heed this message, and help to get it across to everyone you know who might not be watching right now. Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives."

NS: "That is now just as important as it was last March. I ask everybody to take it just as seriously as all of us did back then."