

NHS Scotland heading the UK COVID Infection-rate tables

When the Covid rules were been relaxed in Scotland in August, health experts warned that it may be some time (if ever) before we can say that the Pandemic is over. In the meantime, you continue to follow the guidelines below

There's still a need for some controls - primarily to stop the spread of the virus and protect the individual from catching the large from infection. It may be confusing that some rules will stay in place, yet but in some cases others will be left to individuals e.g. shop managers and publicans to determine how and where these will apply.

The main message is that we should all act 'responsibly'. Be aware of others and treat everyone with respect.. Give others their space - in much the same was as you would look for space of your own.

IT'S TOO SOON TO RELAX!

Don't throw all the good work so far away. Many of the rules have been relaxed since 9th August - but we are encourage to stick to them where possible .

- **Face Coverings** - We don't like them - but we've got to continue to wear a face masks/covering in all public places eg. public transport, shops etc
- **Avoid** crowded places - keep
- **Clean** your hands thoroughly and regularly
- **2-metre gap** - Keep a gap between you and others remember 'social distancing'.
- **Self-isolate** and book a test if you have any sign of symptoms or if you are pinged to say you've been in close contact to someone with COVID,

The Pensions 'Triple-lock' saved FOR NOW

Our next struggle is going to be to protect the 'triple lock' on pensions. Insider reports suggest that due to concerns over rising Covid costs, the Treasury is considering a freeze on the State Pension guarantee arrangement for at least a year.

The triple lock was introduced by Parliament in 2010. It guarantees that the State Pension will increase each year so that it at least matches inflation.

It means that pensions rise each year by which of three measures is the greatest:

- **Average earnings growth**
- **Increase in prices (as per the Consumer Price Index)**
- **2.5 per cent**

The "Grey Vote" must make it absolutely clear to our MPs. We won't accept a freeze next year either!

Westminster refuses to LISTEN as Benefit top-up for OAPs and Families on Income Support is set to be AXED

The Westminster Government is still pressing ahead with its move to axe the COVID £20/week supplement for those on Income Support despite protests from all sectors of the economy. It shows that rather than rather 'drive down/ than 'drive up' the conditions for in our poorest communities Hardest hit will be **Glasgow** which contains the three constituencies in which over half of all families with children will be impacted.

In **Glasgow Central** a massive 63 per cent of families will be affected. In **Glasgow South West** 55 per cent and in **Glasgow North East** 54 per cent of families will lose out.

The cut will have far-reaching consequences across Scotland. Among the constituencies in which over four in ten families with children will lose out are **Dundee**

West (49 per cent); **Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath** (44 per cent); **Aberdeen North** (42 per cent) and **North Ayrshire & Arran** (43 per cent).

Three in ten families with children in the **Moray** seat of Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross will be affected by the cut. Some 3,150 families with children in the marginal seat will experience the cut.

Gordon, another marginal constituency which was won by the SNP from the Conservatives with a majority of 891 at the 2019 election, will see 2,390 families with children impacted.

The Conservative Government rejected appeals from Church and Local Government leaders, Community groups and all other Political groupings to continue the top-up. Is it any wonder they are known as "The Nasty Party"?

There's no Vaccine to counter 'stupidity'

Obviously too many people - many of them under 30 - have the mistaken impression that Covid has been beaten. Others are "Anti-Vaccine". Take the examples of some friends of mine

One aged in early 50s was tested "+ve". When I queried "why did the Vaccine not block it" he said he hadn't bothered to get the jags as he had "had his flu' injection" and "Thought that would be enough"!!

Another old friend and his wife contracted Covid and spent a few weeks in hospital. When I queried why their jags hadn't prevented it I was told that "Their son didn't believe in the Vaccine" and had "convinced them not to be injected"

Scotland is heading the UK's Positive COVID League Tables

If you need any further convincing that we need to stick to the rules - have you seen the UK Covid Statistics - the 'League tables' for +ve tests.

On the 'league table' for confirmed COVID positive tests, Scottish NHS Regions have ranked an amazing **27 out of the top 30** Health Authorities in the UK.

Strikes me that people from all over the World used to flock to Scotland to catch a wild salmon. Now, they're more likely to catch COVID!

COVID 'RAMPANT' in Scotland as we struggle to make sense of the regulations

When Scotland moved beyond level 0 on 9th August, legal requirements for physical distancing and limits on gatherings were removed. Most venues - nightclubs, pubs and restaurants across Scotland have been able to re-open. However, other premises such as Community Centres and churches are still 'controlled' in some way.

It's obvious that the general public - suffering from the on-going pandemic stresses - are increasingly totally-confused with the constant changes! Too many don't understand (or *don't want to understand*) what they should be doing.

Some protective measures stay in place - such as the collection of contact details as part of Test and Protect. Crowd limits indoors & outdoors will also remain, but some exceptions are possible on a case-by-case basis. These are being reviewed on a 3-weekly basis to ensure they remain proportionate.

Face coverings are still mandatory in most indoor public and communal spaces - including restaurants, cafes, bars and public houses. This is because transmission is most likely to occur when people are close to each other, in crowded and poorly ventilated places. With all the variations we just don't know what we can do and where we can do it!

To add to the confusion, Boris Johnson has announced that he's going to bring in 'Vaccine Passports' for England to allow customers to prove they've been vaccinated. Businesses will be expected to carry out an up-to-date Covid-19 risk assessments.

The idea which is being used in France and other EU countries has sparked widespread protest from the Hospitality Industry, Civil Rights groups and Disability Right Campaigners - but Cabinet Ministers have been adamantly defending the plan.

Hold your horses

The UK Government has done an about-turn on its plan to introduce Vaccine Passports in England. The Welsh and Northern Ireland Assemblies have already decided against the idea - leaving Scotland out on a limb on the issue.

It's not like wee Nicola to be "told what to do" - so we await the outcome with interest.

SILVER VOICES

Silver Voices which is run by Dennis Reed - a former NALGO full-time Officer - campaigns on a wide range of issues affecting the 'over sixties'. Most recently, it has led the high-profile campaign against the BBC's decision to remove free TV licences for the over 70s.

The subscription is £8/year. If you rely solely on the State Pension and benefits you qualify for free membership. To join, simply e-mail your details to info@silvervoices.co.uk.

All subscriptions and donations are invested in the website, marketing, campaign and office costs. SV is only as strong as its membership. Why not join? It needs all our support.



The SCAMMERS are still after your money and they are getting better at it!

Recent statistics show that telephone and Internet Scammers have stepped up their efforts to steal money and personal details from unsuspecting individuals - and that their Scams are getting more and more sophisticated. It's also clear that it's older people are being increasingly targeted. Our advice is to use the WHICH website shown below for advice on the most common, up-to-date scams.

WHICH has recently drawn attention to

Messages telling the reader that they'd "won a great prize" in a national or international competition. This used to be a favourite - giving the good news that you'd won top prize in the Spanish Lottery. Quite amazingly, some people fell for it - even though they couldn't remember buying a ticket. The next they knew, their Bank accounts had been cleared out!

One woman told WHICH she'd received a direct message from an account that looked like *Currys PC World* - saying that she'd won a TV and a set of Bluetooth speakers. Luckily, the warning signs flashed when it asked her to confirm her name, mobile number and delivery address to claim her prize.

WHICH gives good advice on 'How to Spot Scams', 'What to Do' and 'How to Get Your Money Back' if you are scammed. The main thing is that you should is to

● **Always** check the sources for any e-mails or letters - even when they appear to be from a reliable source.

● **Never** give bank details until you've checked.

● **Never** just phone the number they give you to check things. Hang up and phone the Bank on your own line or mobile.

<https://campaigns.which.co.uk/scams/>

The WHICH website gives good information on current scams. Sign up if you want to get the latest scam alerts and advice free from 'WHICH' direct to your e-mail address.



No doubt you'll all be relieved to note that you won't need to wear face masks when you attend your next Rave or late-night Disco.

Personally speaking, 've reached the stage in life where Im ready for my bed at 10.30pm

It's not been a bad summer. The weather's been good and there's been enough on the telly with the Olympics, the para-Olympics, Wimbledon and the Open to keep us going.

The next big thing is going to be the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. Oh, and there's the probability of a set-to between the SNP and The UK Tories over Scottish Independence

.... Roll on Xmas

UNISON's Scottish Retired Members Committee

Chairperson Tom Lithgow
Secretary Barbara Fulton

During the pandemic, the Committee has held regular 'virtual meetings. Anyone can take part. For details contact Barbara at

babsunison@yahoo.co.uk