

COVID-19 Pandemic in Scotland – A Timeline of Key Dates

This Inquiry Timeline is predominantly based on data provided by the Scottish Parliament. It does not represent the final opinion of the Inquiry, nor will the Inquiry's investigations be determined by this data.

March 2020

1 March 2020

The first positive case of COVID-19 in Scotland was confirmed in a speech to the Scottish Parliament by Jeane Freeman, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport.

11 March 2020

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), declared coronavirus 'COVID-19' a pandemic.

13 March 2020

The first confirmed death of a COVID-19 patient in Scotland was announced by Catherine Calderwood, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland.

17 March 2020

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister, addressed the Scottish Parliament and reiterated Scottish Government guidance to self-isolate if experiencing symptoms; minimise social contact and follow hygiene advice. The First Minister also indicated a 'Shielding List' of the most vulnerable would be contacted by GPs and healthcare workers.

20 March 2020

John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, confirmed the cancellation of 2020 exams and closure of schools and nurseries, with no time limit set.

22 March 2020

Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister, led the Scottish Government's first televised COVID-19 daily media briefing.

24 March 2020

Following the First Minister's televised address, and a meeting of the UK Government's Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) committee, the first 'lockdown' in Scotland commenced.

26 March 2020

The Scottish Government announced that social distancing enforcement measures were in place and outlined rules on staying at home and away from others.

The Scottish Government produced updated Health Protection Scotland clinical and practice guidance for those working in adult care homes in Scotland during the COVID-19 pandemic.

April 2020

4 April 2020

The Scottish Government published guidance for businesses in Scotland on social distancing, including the closure of all retailers that sell nonessential goods and other non-essential premises.

June 2020

22 June 2020

Face coverings became mandatory on public transport.

July 2020

10 July 2020

The UK Government designated a list of countries which were exempt from the requirement to self-isolate for 14 days on arrival.

August 2020

11 August 2020

Pupils started to return to Scotland's schools.

September 2020

25 September 2020

10pm curfew introduced in the hospitality sector.

October 2020

23 October 2020

The Scottish Government published Scotland's Strategic Framework, a five-level, tiered framework.

29 October 2020

The First Minister introduced Scotland's first set of regional protection levels under the Strategic Framework, which would come into effect on Monday 2 November 2020.

November 2020

2 November 2020

Scotland's regional protection levels commenced with most local authorities in levels 1-3.

December 2020

14 December 2020

The Scottish Government announced that the first vaccinations in care homes in Scotland had taken place.

19 December 2020

New guidance limited the easing of restrictions around Christmas to Christmas Day only.

January 2021

5 January 2021

Mainland Scotland went into lockdown.

18 January 2021

All travel corridors were suspended.

February 2021

10 February 2021

One million first dose COVID-19 vaccinations had been administered in Scotland.

April 2021

2 April 2021

Non-essential journeys within the local authority area were relaxed. The “stay at home” requirement was replaced by “stay local”.

26 April 2021

Scotland moved to Level 3 restrictions. Hospitality venues and tourist accommodation reopened.

September 2021

8 September 2021

The legal requirements for physical distancing and limits on gatherings were removed.

20 September 2021

The Scottish Government launched the COVID-19 booster vaccination programme. Residents in care homes for older people were the first to be offered COVID-19 booster vaccinations.

November 2021

29 November 2021

The first cases of the COVID-19 Omicron variant were identified in Scotland.

December 2021

14 December 2021

The Deputy First Minister confirmed that Lady Poole had been appointed Chair of the Scottish COVID-19 Public Inquiry.

27 December 2021

In an effort to halt the spread of the Omicron variant, 1-metre physical distancing was reinstated in all hospitality and indoor leisure settings.

January 2022

14 January 2022

By 14 January 2022, more than 10,000 people in Scotland had died within 28 days of testing positive for COVID-19.

March 2022

18 March 2022

All international travel restrictions were removed in Scotland.

April 2022

18 April 2022

The legal requirement to wear face coverings on public transport and in most indoor settings was lifted.

30 April 2022

Mass symptomatic PCR COVID-19 testing in Scotland ended, and testing sites closed.

June 2022

28 June 2022

The Coronavirus (Recovery and Reform) (Scotland) Bill was passed in the Scottish Parliament.

October 2022

27 October 2022

The Scottish Government announced the appointment of Lord Brailsford as Chair of the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry following the departure of the previous Chair for personal reasons. He took up the appointment the following day.

May 2023

5 May 2023

The World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 no longer constituted a public health emergency of international concern.