

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Framework for Decision Making: Overview of Public Engagement

May 2020

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1. Foreword

When I launched our Framework on Decision Making I invited people to contribute ideas for how we collectively tackle this virus. Our online platform was open between 5 May and 11 May and in that time we received more than 4,000 ideas and almost 18,000 comments.

That is a fantastic response from the Scottish people and I would like to thank everyone who contributed.

This report attempts to summarise the breadth of those views submitted and to provide an insight into what our fellow citizens are thinking.

Clearly it is incumbent upon us a Government to take those views into account. I can assure those that contributed that their ideas and comments are being used to inform the decisions we will be taking on moving out of the current lockdown.

At its heart, this report shows that the people of Scotland, like us as their Government, are trying to balance tackling this virus with seeing our friends and family and helping our economy recover.

And it is timely, as this week we have also published our route map for easing lockdown restrictions. Respondents were clear that there was little support for a complete lifting of lockdown immediately but also that they were looking for a defined timeline or plan to do so in a phased way.

It is also striking that the ideas that generated the most interest were about contact with other households and improving our quality of life. There is a shared impatience to see families and friends, for some sense of normality to resume.

There's also a strong sense from the comments of people taking personal responsibility and expecting that of their fellow citizens, of the trade-off between asking the Government to ease the restrictions on their freedom based on a commitment to take personal responsibility for their role in controlling the virus.

This is a key theme in our route map, the route to first living with and then defeating this virus is for everyone to know the advice and stick to it. The message to Government from this report is that we need to be crystal clear in that advice to allow that to happen.

That demand for clarity also comes through in the comments on the test, trace and isolate programme – highlighting its key role in providing confidence and reassurance to people as more activity is allowed.

The report also highlights the concerns for individuals and families that the lockdown exacerbates existing inequalities. It also asks for clarity around shielded groups and others who are more vulnerable to the virus. A plea to not be left behind, we hear you.

It also provides a wealth of ideas on how we will open both our schools, childcare facilities and businesses. On the latter there is a clear will for people to be creative in how they can work and operate their businesses safely. On schools and childcare there are a variety of views about how we can reopen these vital services for the benefit our children and allowing people more flexibility to work.

Finally the report highlights people's thoughts on what the future after this virus will look like – from changes in the workplace, to how we travel and how we use public services. It also focusses on those areas where we should seek to learn lessons on how to respond to such a crisis in the future, not least in our care homes.

To be clear, this is not the end of engagement on our response to the virus. We are looking at further ways in which we can encourage ideas and listen as we move carefully into the next phase.

As I have said previously, I understand that we are asking a lot of you in handling this lockdown. But if we continue to work together, and listen to each other, to manage our way through this virus, we will be able to get back to the freedoms we all enjoy and deserve.

This virus has taken the lives of too many people and it has imposed a lockdown on us unprecedented in living memory. This document shows the people of Scotland want to take personal responsibility for protecting their fellow citizens, they want to get out, they want to see their friends and family and they want to get back to work.

This report will help us help them to do so.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola Sturgeon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicola Sturgeon
First Minister of Scotland

2. Introduction

This report sets out the results of a rapid analysis of the key themes that emerged from the public engagement exercise launched following the publication of [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Framework for Decision Making – Further Information](#) on 5 May 2020. The engagement also sought views on the [Test, Trace, Isolate, Support](#) strategy, published on 4 May.

The First Minister launched the digital platform at her briefing on 5 May 2020 for immediate engagement. The platform was available from 12.30 on 5 May until 22.00 on 11 May. All ideas and comments published on the platform are available to view at www.ideas.gov.scot/covid-19-a-framework-for-decision-making.

The platform represented one of the means of dialogue with the public during the pandemic and was designed to meet “the immediate need for public engagement on the decision-making process concerning the current restrictions, [so that] we may also develop tools and habits of discourse that can be adapted to inform the longer-term recovery and renewal process to come.”

This analysis is being considered widely across the Scottish Government, alongside more detailed consideration of information that is relevant to specific issues. It will provide context to Scottish Ministers on the range of public attitudes as they set out the next steps for recovery.

The digital platform involved the submission of ‘ideas’¹ by registered users. The contributor had the opportunity to provide a title for their idea, and say ‘why the contribution is important’. Registered users could rate the idea on a five-star scale, and/or provide comments. All contributions to the website were pre-moderated in accordance with the published [moderation policy](#) before appearing on the site. The site was visible to members of the public, whether or not they registered as users.

Eight ideas were ‘pre-seeded’ by the Scottish Government Digital Communications Team in order to encourage people to engage with the themes in the Framework and the Test, Trace, Isolate, Support Strategy. The Scottish Government pre-seeded ideas were consistently among the top five ideas with the most comments. A full overview of the top 20 threads by comments and number of ratings is provided in Annex B.

In addition two ideas were added to prompt users with a broad topic that would allow them to outline key concerns. These were: ‘[What one change to the current restrictions would have the most positive impact on your life?](#)’ and ‘[What could help enable people to comply with the lockdown restrictions?](#)’ Users were encouraged to join an existing discussion on an idea similar to their concerns, but were free to add their own idea. Moderators locked discussion on ideas where it was thought they were duplicating something already on the site and signposted contributors to comment on the existing idea instead.

Engagement, in terms of ideas, comments and new users, was broadly consistent throughout the week.

¹ The terminology used by the engagement platform to describe different types of contributions made by users, including ‘ideas’, ‘comments’ and ‘ratings’, are described in the methodology.

3. Methodology

Over the course of the platform ‘challenge’, 4122² ideas were published and 17,966 comments were posted. These came from 11,692 registered users, of whom 3,274 submitted ideas. Members of the public also engaged with the Scottish Government through email - 136 emails received during the challenge were also included in the analysis.

Ideas had ‘topics’ added to them by members of the moderation team and members of the Scottish Government’s Social Research Group while the challenge was open. Topics were taken from a thematic coding framework that was developed by the Social Research Group to correspond with key themes of the Framework document and the Test, Trace, Isolate, Support strategy³. The thematic coding framework was updated as new topics emerged during the challenge. The added topics are visible on the website, and provided a rapid ‘coding’ of ideas to the topics they covered for further analysis. An optimisation exercise was conducted once the challenge was closed in order to make sure similar topics, or different spellings, e.g. ‘reopening’ and ‘re-opening’ were grouped together.

With a high volume of information on the platform, during the challenge social researchers identified emerging themes through analysis of the most engaged-with threads (by number of ratings, and number of comments) as well as searches by theme. Researchers also analysed ideas and comments as they were posted in real time. Therefore themes also emerged from threads with lower overall engagement. Throughout the challenge, social researchers produced daily analytical notes. Once the website was closed for submissions, researchers continued to carry out further analysis by framework themes and the most engaged with ideas.

Given that many ideas were rated or commented-on a small number of times, researchers also identified the ‘most engaged with ideas’ (idea threads with the highest number of ratings, or the highest number of comments) (See Annex B). These included ‘highly rated’ ideas – ideas with high engagement (among the top 20 threads by number of ratings) and high rating (above 4.5 stars). These were judged by researchers to be ideas with a wide degree of popularity. Researchers also identified ideas with lower ratings within the top 20 most commented-on group which attracted more polarised opinions. We have attempted to provide an overview of commentary on key ideas, but have not, in the time available, coded each comment as being in support or opposition to the original idea.

As a number of ideas covered similar issues, we have grouped these, where obvious, under the ‘topics’ in the thematic framework and reported the total number of comments and ratings as a measure of engagement in Annex C. However, in

² Of the 4254 ideas submitted to the site, 132 ideas were rejected due to being in breach of the [moderation policy](#).

³ Note. At this time it is not possible to say categorically that coders’ approaches were highly consistent. There are a number of inherent checks in the methodology, such as multiple researchers having sight of the most-engaged with threads, real-time sight of incoming ideas, and ensuring similar topic tags are treated together to provide further re-assurance that the findings are broadly consistent.

many cases, ideas may differ in their advocated approach to the extent that judging the support for them, relative to other ideas on the subject, is not possible. Alternatively, the number and characteristics of users rating ideas may not be comparable across ideas, so further caution should be exercised in comparing average ratings.

Over the course of the 'challenge', it was clear to researchers working on emerging themes that there was a broad degree of consistency from day to day. After the 'challenge', researchers, working within each of the main themes of the Framework and Test, Trace, Isolate and Support Strategy organised the key ideas and reported the main solutions and attitudes expressed. The two approaches were found to yield similar findings.

Respondents are self-selecting and do not represent a random sample of the population of Scotland. We did not require evidence of residence in Scotland, or ask people to report their demographic characteristics, so do not have independent evidence of representativeness. It is likely that the group who engaged with the platform were the digitally included and thus this is a reason for caution in interpreting the findings. However, it must be understood the platform was designed to solicit ideas from the public and give them the opportunity to comment on the Scottish Government's approach, not to measure their attitudes. All quotes used in this report are verbatim, although some have been shortened.

Finally, this analysis does not set out to be a detailed examination of all the ideas and their relative effectiveness or relevance to the issues. This is an overview of what those who engaged with the framework said to us. Given the rapid nature of this analysis, it has not been possible to be comprehensive, or definitively quantify the balance of opinion on the platform. It is one part of the information to be considered by decision makers.

4. The Scottish Government's approach to the pandemic

There was discussion of the Scottish Government's approach overall and over the decision to follow a different pace for lifting restrictions than the UK Government. One of the most polarising issues was how to manage the Scotland/England border, in light of this different approach, and the differences in infection rates.

There was a general trend of people feeling that activities and services should open if it is safe for them to do so. This applies across NHS services, businesses and outdoor activities. There was little appetite for a complete lifting of lockdown restrictions at this stage, and widespread support for a phased approach to doing this. Even amongst those who would lift most restrictions, there was consideration for the need to protect particularly vulnerable groups. Discussions about the Scottish Government's overall approach focussed around:

- How lockdown should be lifted
- Divergence from the UK approach
- Regional variation within Scotland
- Official communications
- The evidence base

How lockdown should be lifted⁴

There was disagreement over whether social or economic measures should be prioritised in decisions about lifting lockdown. Some argued that people's health and wellbeing has to be the priority, while others pointed out the impact that economic uncertainty has on these same factors. Many felt that schools returning would have both social and economic impacts. Little consensus was reached on this consideration.

There was discussion of the proportionality of the Scottish Government's approach, whether people should be instead trusted to make responsible decisions, and whether Scotland should accept greater risk. Some argued that herd immunity is an unavoidable outcome and it is not possible to eliminate risk – “trying to control the uncontrollable” - so a balance should be struck given the other harms caused by the lockdown. At the same time, there was a largely negative reaction against those who suggest pursuing a total herd immunity strategy. Many maintained that it is not acceptable for the Scottish Government to accept a greater degree of risk until there is more confidence in the R number or until we have a greater understanding of how the virus is transmitted (for example the risk posed by people without symptoms and children).

Contributions on risk acceptance fell into two main groups. The first group felt that the focus should be on protecting and supporting the most vulnerable, particularly those in care homes, while allowing greater freedoms to the majority of the population.

⁴ The most commented-on idea relating to lifting the lockdown attracted 161 comments and 281 ratings: [Continue Lock Down](#)

“We need a more balanced approach. We need to protect the most vulnerable and let the rest get back to work. We need to be clear about the risks of living with COVID vs the risks of everyday life that exist any way. This needs to be done in a transparent way with facts and data.”

The second group were concerned about large numbers of the most ‘at-risk’ people being “forgotten” or “left behind” while the rest of society return to a degree of normality. In particular, a number of respondents were unhappy that the “over-70s” were classified as monolithic group and felt that using age as a primary determinant for whose movement is restricted would be discriminatory, preferring that older people be allowed the autonomy to choose the risks they are willing to take.

“Age discrimination in other circumstances is illegal. It should be here. Let the more senior members of our community decide for themselves whether they want to continue to self-isolate or continue lockdown. I know lots of very spry over 70s.”

A number of respondents felt that under the current restrictions people are “existing rather than living”, in particular those in care homes and people who are shielding.

There is also discussion on the need to support people to cope emotionally as lockdown is lifted, in particular key workers, and recognising the mental health impact lockdown has had.

Divergence from UK approach⁵

There was disagreement over whether Scotland should follow the approach set out by the UK Government, or whether the Scottish Government should set its own course. Some favoured the approach taken in Scotland and felt it should be applied across the UK.

There were relatively limited responses relating directly to the changes in lockdown announced by the UK Prime Minister on 10 May. Some expressed support for the Scottish Government’s approach, and clarity of messaging. Some, who were supportive of the Scottish approach, expressed concern about the challenges of conveying this message while different messages come out of Westminster.

Others argued that Scotland should align with the UK Government approach to allow some return to normality and to maintain a consistent approach. There were concerns about children falling behind in their education compared to their English peers, businesses closing Scottish sites, and the potential for social unrest if different parts of the UK move at different speeds.

“It would make it very hard to keep to lockdown for longer if, for example, England allowed construction to go back to work but in Scotland this was still banned. A feeling of real discontent could emerge.”

⁵ The most commented-on idea relating to this topic attracted 48 comments and was rated by 89 people: [Align with UK government communications](#)

There was also concern about the possibility of increased travel from England to Scotland. Some called for temporary restrictions on the Scottish border for this reason⁶:

“If Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland are working at different rules and times my worry is that people from these different areas can travel for example from England to Scotland freely. I think there had to be temporary restrictions until leaders of all the above are on the same level.”

“It was travel that spread this virus in the first place; the more people can stay local, the more chance there is of achieving virus-free pockets. The Prime Minister's words tonight will not have helped and those down south may genuinely not know (or be confused about) the different rules we are trying to live by in Scotland.”

There were mixed responses to this idea. While it did generate some support, many were strongly opposed and argued that this would damage companies working across the border and make it difficult for families and friends who would be separated by the border. People argued that existing guidelines should be sufficient.

There were calls for the 14-day quarantine to be applied to international arrivals from all countries and some who felt this regulation did not go far enough – including the suggestion of an additional “travel card” for international arrivals giving details of travel plans to support contact tracing. However, others expressed concerns about the economic impact of a quarantine period. Other suggestions included requiring arrivals to undergo testing and temperature checks.

Regional variation within Scotland

There were differences of opinion on the idea of having regional variation of lockdown restrictions. Many felt that a consistent approach across Scotland, or even the UK, would be easier for people to understand and comply with, however some argued for regional variation based on the needs and risks in individual communities.

“There may well be cause for divergent policy across different parts of Scotland - the needs of the Western Isles are different from those of Glasgow. I think it is best we allow the Scottish Government the flexibility to respond accordingly.”

There were suggestions of easing lockdown restrictions by postcode or implementing a colour coding system for local risk levels. Some argued that the R number should be published to show regional variation within Scotland. Others felt this could provoke either concern or complacency depending on the numbers. It was suggested that island communities could be relatively easily policed and tested, and could be test cases for how lockdown can be lifted and for new TTI systems. Conversely, there was concern that rural communities could be vulnerable

⁶ The most commented-on idea relating to this topic attracted 103 comments and was rated by 237 people: [Close the Scotland/England border](#)

if travel was resumed, and that this would impede the “we’re all in this together” message.

Official communications

Respondents felt that clear communications are vital and many would like to see a more defined timeline or plan which they feel would give them a sense of hope and something to aim for. Respondents called for clarity about any difference in approaches to the other administrations in the UK.

Many respondents were supportive of the Scottish Government and First Minister’s approach, in particular the use of evidence, transparency and care for members of the public. Feedback on the First Minister’s daily briefings included calls for more detailed statistics and graphical representation. In addition, it was suggested that the signer could be more prominent to aid lip-reading and that members of the public could also ask questions as well as journalists.

“The briefing is a real opportunity to show that you are listening to the person sitting at home. Show that you connect on a more personal level. We are not all thinking about or only concerned with the recurring themes the journalists raise.”

It was argued that the government should be honest with people and accept that a certain degree of risk is unavoidable. There was also discussion of the need to reduce the negative impacts of false news and increase media transparency.

Evidence base

Those arguing for lockdown measures to be eased suggested that there is little evidence about how restrictions slow the spread of the virus. There were suggestions about alternative ways of improving the evidence base, including sewage/waste water analysis to help understand the R number and identify areas of high infection.

There were suggestions that the UK should follow the World Health Organisation’s safety guidance on vaccine trials, which is described as less strict than the current approach, and therefore would allow quicker vaccine development.

A few respondents questioned why the R number should be the most significant factor, compared to hospital admissions/capacity. There was also a call for better data to explain why the R number in Scotland is higher in England despite the fact that, it is argued, Scotland introduced tougher lockdown measures and introduced them earlier:

“We need a lot more information about why Scotland’s R number seems to be higher than England. We went into lockdown and shut schools just before England and we had tougher rules about construction shutdown etc. So why is our R number higher? Is it care homes, lack of PPE, or are we picking it up in supermarkets or hospitals? Much more data needs to be gathered on positive cases and shared with the public.”

5. Future changes to advice about staying at home⁷

Ideas relating to future changes to advice about staying at home drew much support and were consistently in the top-rated ideas across the platform. Participation in outdoor activities featured strongly in response to the question on what changes could be made to improve quality of life during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) response. There was also discussion about how greater freedoms can be safely allowed. Discussion centred on:

- Allowing socially distanced sport
- Use of parks and outdoor spaces
- Travel
- Face masks
- Reopening garden centres
- Reopening places of worship
- Allowing travel to second homes

Allowing socially distanced outdoor sports⁸

Many respondents supported increased access to outdoor locations and activities, particularly activities that could be easily conducted while maintaining social distancing. The mental and physical health benefits of outdoor exercise was a common theme across these discussions.

There was strong support for allowing outdoor recreational activities like hillwalking, climbing, fishing and kayaking. However, a concern was raised about these activities putting pressure on rescue services, particularly if more inexperienced people engage in them as there are fewer options for leisure activities. There was also a concern about car parks becoming overcrowded at popular destinations and suggestions of managing this through issuing permits – the revenue from which could support local economies.

The topic of golf received high levels of engagement and support in particular, with respondents highlighting that this involved limited physical contact and that many clubs had implemented hygiene guidelines prior to lockdown that would minimise the risk of transmission.⁹ Similar arguments were made in support of tennis and bowls which also received good engagement. Some respondents also highlighted the economic impact on smaller clubs and rural economies.

However, a smaller number of respondents noted that golf courses have been repurposed by the public during lockdown for exercising (e.g. walking, running). This was a source of frustration for many respondents in favour of re-opening golf

⁷ The most commented-on idea relating to advice about staying at home was pre-seeded by the Scottish Government and attracted 118 comments and was rated by 128 people: [Future Changes to Advice About Staying at Home](#)

⁸ The most commented-on idea related to outdoor sports attracted 83 comments and was rated by 194 people: [Allow Participation in Some Outdoor Mostly Solitary Sports](#)

⁹ The most commented-on idea relating to golf attracted 199 comments and was rated by 194 people: [Golf Course](#)

courses, while for several others, this was an issue of equality of access and these respondents felt that reopening golf courses would benefit far fewer people.

“Keep the courses closed as more use to walkers than golfers.”

In a similar vein, some respondents felt that reopening golf courses and tennis courts would benefit those of higher incomes who were more likely to live in houses with access to gardens already, therefore measures targeting people living in flats and from lower income backgrounds should be given higher priority. However, it should be noted that other respondents disagreed with the assertion that golf and tennis were elite sports and instead posited that people of all backgrounds were represented within these sports.

A small number of respondents were concerned about the age demographics for sports such as golf and bowls where older, more ‘at-risk’ people may be overrepresented.

There was also commentary around how cyclists and runners could be persuaded to be more considerate of pedestrians, and how all pavement users can be encouraged to adhere to two-metre physical distancing.

It was suggested that sporting events and activities could be assigned ‘risk levels’ as a way to distinguish between those that were more or less likely to raise transmission levels. Respondents suggested these ‘risk level’ classifications could be used by the Scottish Government when giving advice about exercise and recreational activities.

Use of parks and outdoor spaces

A smaller number of ideas discussed opening outdoor gyms, holding outdoor gym classes, and opening playgrounds for children while still observing physical distancing by limiting the number of people accessing these facilities at a time.

While most respondents were supportive of such suggestions, many highlighted that if shared equipment was involved, strict hygiene measures would have to be followed.

Some supported easing restrictions to allow sitting, relaxing, sunbathing, or picnicking outdoors – either in remote outdoor locations or in parks. Other respondents, however, were notably more sceptical about easing measures regarding outdoor relaxation. They expressed concerns that sunbathing and picnicking were intrinsically more social activities that risked overcrowding in tight spaces.

It was noticeable that calls for allowing general outdoor relaxation often stemmed from concerns that particular demographics (flat residents, low income groups, urban populations) were disproportionately disadvantaged by restrictions on outdoor activity. Some suggested that public parks could be used for relaxation but with priority given to those who do not have a private garden of their own, and particularly

children. Suggestions also included reopening outdoor spaces like zoos and botanic gardens.

There were calls for the regular monitoring of endangered species by volunteers to restart, in particular nesting sites. These are in remote rural locations which, it was argued, pose little risk.

Travel

Many respondents were supportive of easing restrictions to permit short car journeys for leisure or exercise. Short drives to local countryside, woodland, and beaches, were widely seen as easy, low-risk ways to boost wellbeing for households while “alleviating the monotony of being at home.” Many tended to emphasise that short car journeys would allow the traffic of outdoor activity to be directed away from increasingly congested residential areas.

Some called for caution. They described the need to take measures in high-demand “honeypot locations” to limit transmission risks. These could be keeping popular car parks closed, issuing permits, or providing guidance on choosing quiet locations. Views were split as to whether distance limits should be applied. Some felt that the public should be able to roam into “further afield areas” – while maintaining safe distancing. Yet, there were a large number of respondents who stressed that strict distance limits should be in place to ensure that drivers “stay local.” There were concerns about “city people driving to rural Scotland, swamping small villages” and the risk associated with virus clusters emerging in areas where the health service capacity is lower.

However, others argued that everyone should have equal access to the countryside and outdoor pursuits, regardless of where you live. There were also concerns from those living large distances from loved ones that travel restrictions could prevent them from seeing family or friends even if restrictions on seeing loved ones are eased.

There was discussion on subsidising electric bikes and scooters to encourage active travel and reduce the burden on public transport and the environmental impact of more people using cars. Suggestions included a salary sacrifice scheme.

There was commentary on the use of cars being discouraged due to the requirement for interactions for fuel/maintenance. Others, however, argued that public transport is limited in rural areas, and many see public transport as higher risk for transmission.

Face masks¹⁰

Face masks were a popular theme and key issues included whether or not they should be mandatory, their availability and cost, and how to manage this requirement without diverting supplies away from frontline health services. There was also debate about cost implications of mass supplying face masks, and of the sufficiency of the

¹⁰ The most commented-on idea relating to face masks attracted 79 comments and was rated by 174 people: [Enforce the Wearing of Masks](#)

scientific evidence to make this mandatory. Many felt that people could use other forms of face coverings on a voluntary basis.

“I would feel much safer if everyone is wearing a mask in places where I cannot avoid people.”

There was discussion on requiring people engaging in outdoor sport like running and cycling to wear facemasks. Some noted that runners and cyclists have not been adhering to the two-metre social distancing advice and that there may be an additional risk from these people due to the “slipstream” effect. Others argued that it would be dangerous to require people to wear masks when exercising and that this could discourage people from engaging activities that are good for their health.

There is concern about the impact of face masks on deaf people or those who have a hearing impairment. It was suggested that the policy is discriminatory and could significantly disadvantage deaf people, limit their independence and risk their safety:

“Deaf people cannot lipread if everyone is wearing masks. Sound is also muffled if people are speaking through masks. There are other disabilities who will struggle to wear masks. Our needs are not being taken into account.”

Reopening places of worship

Some respondents suggested that places of worship should be reopened if they can do so safely while observing physical distancing. They highlighted the value of religious settings for ‘mental and emotional health,’ especially for the elderly and vulnerable people. A few respondents emphasised that religion is a human right, and felt that if places of worship remained closed while leisure activities were reopened, this would be discriminatory.

“Faith is more important than ever in these times. To be able to visit places of worship in a safe manner with appropriate measures to facilitate health and wellbeing would be so helpful to faith communities.”

A small number of respondents raised concerns about this idea, including the argument that faith could be practiced safely at home and that the demographics of those most likely to use places of worship may include some of the most ‘at risk’ from the virus.

Reopening garden centres¹¹

There was much support for reopening garden centres to allow people to access the resources for gardening, highlighting the physical and mental health benefits of this both as a leisure activity and a form of exercise. There was a concern that some businesses that sell gardening supplies have remained open and that this has been additionally detrimental to garden centres and plant nurseries. Some highlighted risks of a “rush” on stores and concerns that older, more ‘at-risk’ people may be the

¹¹ The most commented-on idea relating to opening garden centres attracted 55 comments and was rated by 141 people: [Open Garden Centres](#)

most likely to attend. Suggestions included implementing “click and collect” and queuing systems similar to supermarkets.

Allowing travel to second homes

There was some discussion on visiting second homes and using caravans. Arguments for this include increasing wellbeing, protecting against property damage and potential costs that will be incurred due to any damage during lockdown.

“It’s people’s property, they need to make sure it’s secure, damp and damage free for starters. It could be costly if things are just left. Caravans need to be opened up and aired in this weather. Also for people’s mental well-being.”

Others point out that caravan club membership fees are still being paid, but without being able to use the facilities. However, there were those arguing that travelling to second properties would involve attending local facilities which would increase risk of disease spread.

6. Changes to advice about visiting other households¹²

This chapter covers the specific proposal to allow households to visit each other within a defined group – a ‘bubble’. Discussions centred on the following:

- Allowing meetings with other households
- Most ‘at-risk’ groups
- ‘Shielded’ groups

Allowing meetings with other households

There was clear desire expressed by many respondents to be able to meet with people outside their households. There were seen to be many benefits, in terms of mental health, morale, a sense of greater freedom and contact with friends and family. These were particularly acute in a number of circumstances:

- People in relationships, e.g. partners who lived in separate households and are not permitted to mix
- Grandparents having contact with grandchildren. This was seen as beneficial on a number of levels: mental health, reduced isolation for older people, potential childcare
- Children, particularly where they are the only child in a household or live with only one parent, as having interaction with peers would improve mental health and development
- Single-person households, including older people, who are currently isolated
- Those with poor mental health who may be particularly harmed by isolation

“Family contact is a must. Most people could happily endure the restrictions longer with this small change. I have a family member with severe and enduring mental health issues hurtling towards the point of no return. I have not broken the lockdown yet, but every day I consider it.”

“Every time we come off FaceTime all 3 kids are upset and so [are] the grandparents. Seeing them over camera is totally different to seeing them in person and having small contact such as hug.”

It was also argued that two single-person households should be allowed to ‘buddy up’ during lockdown to prevent isolation.

However there were mixed views on whether social contact between households should ultimately be permitted as there were concerns with how the intricacies of physical distancing within ‘a bubble’ could be communicated, and who is permitted to be in a bubble. Many thought policing bubbles would be difficult.

There was divergence in views about how many could be in a bubble, and whether they should be selected on the basis of individuals or households. Many correspondents argued that the decision on who to include in a bubble might be

¹² The most commented-on idea relating to visiting other households was pre-seeded by the Scottish Government and attracted 247 comments and was rated by 327 people: [Visiting other households](#)

particularly stressful if people with larger social networks need to choose between different friends and family members. Furthermore, clarity was required on how far away bubble members can live from each other.

Once a bubble is established, there were many suggestions about what they could be permitted to do together, whether they should still be required to maintain physical distancing from each other, and whether multi-household bubbles could meet up if distant from each other. In addition there were questions about length and frequency of visits and how long bubbles could interact. Children would benefit from social interaction, but might find it more difficult to maintain physical distancing. The location of where bubbles could meet was discussed, whether this was only permissible in public spaces like parks, or could take place in gardens or driveways, which were argued to be equivalent in safety and could help limit overcrowding.

Concern was expressed that opportunities to meet up would be an excuse for wider-scale socialising, in defiance of the rules and increasing risk.

“It's for the greater good, and in fact it's to protect the older people that they are being shielded [...] It's hard not to see your loved ones except on a screen but it's better than falling seriously ill or perhaps dying. And it won't be forever. Just please be so grateful if you and your loved ones are lucky enough to remain in good health. Then you will be able to spend time together in the future.”

Still others may be completely excluded from bubbles and be further isolated. It was argued that socially distanced befriending schemes should be supported.

While many would welcome the increased flexibility of being able to interact with other households, others were concerned about the impact on most 'at-risk' and 'shielded' groups. This was in terms of their vulnerability if greater social interaction caused more circulation of the virus, but also their need to rely on services from strangers.

A number of respondents suggested that easing social contact restrictions should be combined with measures to make compliance more effective, such as communicating graphical presentations of how social contact is linked to transmission rates. An effective contact tracing strategy would also help control risk.

Most 'at-risk' groups

However, a significant strain of concern, evident in both responses to the platform and email communication to the Scottish Government, was the separation of most 'at-risk' groups from the rest of the society, perhaps until such time as a vaccine is widely available. People were worried that society might be opened up while restrictions remain for “the vulnerable”. However, as noted in comments on the Scottish Government approach above, members of the most 'at-risk' group were not all the same. Groups identified by demographic, for example older people, contain a variety of healthy people well able to look after themselves, as well as more frail people requiring help. Similarly many people with underlying health conditions live active lives, especially if their condition is controlled.

In terms of who might have to stay under restrictions, there was a perceived lack of clarity as to what applied to the most 'at-risk' group and the 'shielded' group - who had been given more specific guidance to keep themselves completely isolated and not venture out. There were examples of people who believed themselves to be vulnerable, and therefore required to live in isolation, but who had not received letters from the NHS, and thus did not have evidence to show their employers.

Other respondents who were more recognisably most 'at-risk', e.g. over 80s, felt that they required support from health services which they weren't getting at this time. At the same time, as noted above, those in the wider most 'at-risk' group wanted more guidance on the actual level of risk associated with their conditions – and how it may apply cumulatively if they have multiple risk factors – so that they could make decisions about how to look after themselves.

'Shielded' groups

For those definitively in the 'shielded' group, there was still a desire to be able to go out and interact with others, and concern that the lockdown would continue for them while others resumed greater freedom.

“We need to find a way to 'take the shielded' with 'us' as we move tentatively out of complete lock down. Don't leave us behind in the cupboard shouting at us from a safe social distance 'that it is all for our own good'. Let us be the judge of that. To be clear, I don't want the government or agencies to focus on redoubling efforts to support our being shielded (locked in a cupboard).”

Many 'shielded' people wished to be allowed out to exercise, if necessary at set times, or with obvious ways of signalling they need to keep their distance (e.g. high-visibility vests). Other respondents worried about whether they would have to choose between isolating and being able to access other services, such as health, important to their wellbeing.

'Shielded' people were keen to be valued by society, and not “discarded” as other groups got on with life. In terms of the support available, many groups were concerned about their ongoing financial position, and whether a furlough scheme would continue for them, or other measures, such as a universal basic income.

Official ceremonies¹³

A number of respondents called for wedding ceremonies to be resumed, with restrictions on guest numbers and clear social distancing advice. People emphasised the pain caused to couples who have been forced to delay their wedding, in particular couples who have decided not to live together or have children until they are married. Some suggested that marriage registration should be possible online, to limit physical interactions with staff.

¹³ The most commented-on idea relating to marriage ceremonies attracted 43 comments and 110 votes: Marriage – [Allow with Minimal Attendees](#)

“I am due to get married next month and I agree that introducing an alternative system for processing marriage applications would make such a huge difference. My fiancé is an NHS doctor working on one of the COVID-19 wards and the prohibition of new marriages has added even more strain during these already difficult times. We have chosen not to live together before marriage on the grounds of our religious beliefs, and not being able to see each other has made lockdown an even more painful experience. I am sure that as well as bringing lots of joy to couples currently waiting to marry, introducing an online system would also help to ease the load on registry offices who will have an enormous backlog to deal with once this pandemic is over.”

A number of respondents also spoke about the pain caused by limitations on funeral numbers, and expressed concerns that people have been unable to properly grieve for loved ones. They argued that more people should be allowed to attend funerals as long as social distancing is adhered to. People felt that this would support grieving families, that crematoriums are big enough to allow for this, and people can take personal responsibility for adhering to physical distancing rules. Counter arguments were also made that, when grieving, people may not be able to take “personal responsibility” and that the virus won’t respect the sanctity of a funeral.

“One of the cruellest restrictions in my opinion. Crematoriums etc. are big enough to allow social distancing and same household members can sit together.”

7. Options for resuming care and support for those most affected by the current restrictions¹⁴

This chapter deals with wider health and social care and how the NHS can best return to delivering important routine care. The best use of capacity, both to respond to the pandemic, and in terms of adapting it to wider health issues, is considered. There are also specific concerns about how care homes are supported and protected. Discussion focusses on:

- The wider health impact of living in lockdown
- Wider health services
- Care homes

Wider health impact of living in lockdown

The wider health impacts of lockdown were widely discussed by respondents. Mental health strains were continually described by many across a number of topic areas. Difficulties associated with being isolated and unable to see friends and family were discussed at length. Some discussed how social restrictions had negatively affected health behaviours such as physical activity and diet, which could impact the number of people who are 'overweight' or 'obese'. Others felt that some groups might be particularly susceptible to substance misuse at this time.

Wider health services

There was widespread support on the platform for the resumption of a greater range of health services. Concerns were expressed about many of the public who were balancing Coronavirus (COVID-19) health priorities with non-virus related priorities. It was felt that many were missing out on vital care and were at greater risk if they missed opportunities to seek support or routine treatment and screenings. Others described not seeking help for less threatening but uncomfortable or painful conditions.

“Many people with life threatening or long term conditions are being discouraged from contacting medical authorities by the constantly repeated death toll figures & projections. In addition many clinics have been cancelled leaving those previously receiving treatments in limbo including cancer patients, diabetics with sight issues or ulcers and those in chronic pain without support etc. Covid 19 is not the only serious threat to life & limb but has been allowed to overwhelm other medical services to the serious risk to many.”

This was also true of wider health services such as dental services, physiotherapy, audiology and psychiatry that many felt could resume with the appropriate PPE.

There were also concerns about the impact on pregnant women and new parents. Many were concerned that they were unable to get support from wider friends and

¹⁴ The most commented-on idea relating resuming health services was [Resume Dental Treatment](#) which attracted 43 comments and 121 ratings. The pre-seeded Scottish Government idea attracted 30 comments and was rated by 51 people: [Resuming care and support for people](#)

family that they would usually call upon. Others were concerned that pregnant women did not have access to the routine support usually available, e.g. midwifery services and health visitors. Respondents also said partners should be able to attend routine scans, appointments and labour wards – with PPE in place.

Respondents also gave ideas for how existing services could be concentrated in the current situation. Facilities such as NHS Louisa Jordan were advocated as somewhere where Coronavirus (COVID-19) patients could be treated to maintain safety at other facilities and as a way of freeing up space to clear the backlog of elective operations and routine screening. A variation on this suggestion was to split hospitals into Coronavirus (COVID-19) facilities and hospitals for patients without the virus, which might reduce transmission and improve uptake of services.

Care Homes

Overall, there seemed to be a widespread view that, as one of the contributors put it, “the pandemic is still very much rife in our care homes” and that action and resources are needed to limit the number of infections and deaths in care homes. One contributor called for two separate strategies for care homes and for the general public, noting that the lockdown will be causing more and more frustration with the general public, especially when it is believed a large number of cases are within the care home community.

There was quite a widespread feeling that the approach for keeping care homes safe has so far been a failure. One contributor wrote that although the issue of Coronavirus (COVID-19) hotspots in care homes was identified very early in this pandemic, there has been no progress in resolving it.

“Too little has been done and too late. Human-to-human transmission has been known about for weeks if not months. Protection of care home residents now needs to improve massively to combat against this and [...] other existing and unknown infections.”

Other commentators recognised that this would nevertheless be a difficult task, first of all because of the claimed limitations and effectiveness of testing.

Yet others seemed to doubt whether care homes, which are often privately run, can enforce the regulations required and some called for action to ensure compliance, including taking care homes into public ownership.

There were calls for more extensive testing in care homes or selective testing of workers and tradespeople:

“Now that more testing capacity is available, every resident and every care worker associated with every care home in Scotland needs to be tested to get a baseline on the scale of the care home issue. No worker or tradesperson should be entering a care home unless they have been tested immediately prior and shown negative, and have isolated since their most recent test. The consequences for the residents are too high to wait for the first case in a care

home before taking action. The understanding of transmission is sufficiently developed to justify the above action under the precautionary principle.”

A number of other suggestions appeared across various posts on how to keep care homes free from Coronavirus (COVID-19). These included:

- Setting up changing rooms in the car parks for staff to change out of home clothes into a clean uniform kept on site and appropriate PPE. Post-shift uniforms should be bagged (in scrub bags) and laundered onsite
- Isolate staff in care homes as soon as a Coronavirus (COVID-19) case was confirmed in a care home and replace those staff with a new team
- Reduce staff changeover in care homes to minimise risk of virus transmission
- Supplying more PPE to care homes
- Supplying mobile testing units to care home to detect Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Moving ‘spare nurses’ from all our intensive care units to care homes, mobilising student nurses, volunteers, civil servants and public servants who are not working at full capacity to help in care homes

At the same time it was noted that many of these measures could increase pressure on care home staff, who some respondents believe are already over-worked and under-paid.

There was a separate idea which emphasised care homes “need to look at ways to facilitate short periods of contact.”

“Otherwise many older people will die, miserable and alone having never seen their family again. If they do not die from covid, then it will be due to medical conditions related to stress and bereavement.”

One other respondent noted that the Danish care system was able to facilitate socially-distant meetings with families in care home gardens. Still others believed that lockdown of care homes hadn’t prevented the virus entering care homes and that visitors could also isolate or wear appropriate PPE.

One contribution noted that not all care homes cater for the elderly and that some are for adults with learning disabilities who are physically fit and healthy (thus arguably not a high risk Coronavirus (COVID-19) group), and therefore rules for no mobility out of care homes could be relaxed for them, especially if the care home is in remote setting.

8. Changes affecting business that have been subject to restrictions or closure¹⁵

There was widespread discussion about how to support businesses and workers that have been subject to restrictions or closure in Scotland during the pandemic. Many expressed concerns around the long-term damage done to businesses and the economy, and offered ideas on practical steps that could be taken to support businesses. Others focussed on concerns around unemployment, furlough schemes, and the need to provide protections to workforces at this time. Many respondents offered ideas and suggestions on assistance that could be provided to particular sectors (including construction, manufacturing, housing, transport and tourism).

However, while ideas around support, innovation, and practical steps to encourage businesses to reopen were popular among many respondents, there remained debate about:

- which businesses should be allowed to open now and which should be allowed to reopen sooner than others (on the basis that they can guarantee safe social distancing)
- the level of 'acceptable risk' that should be allowed in workplaces, and how Scotland's economic interests should be balanced with the health of its population

Practical steps on reopening businesses

There was consensus among many that if a business can operate in a 'safe' way then they should be allowed to open. Equally, if they cannot make these guarantees they should not.

Most ideas on the practical steps to reopen businesses focused on industries that involve face-to-face interactions between customers and sellers or service providers, as well as among customers (e.g. tourism, hospitality, retail, sports and leisure, beauty industry, housing market). These ideas tended to focus on restricting the number of possible interactions between customers in business establishments by:

- limiting the number of people allowed to enter at one time, possibly facilitated by technology (e.g. prior bookings that would also minimise social contact while queuing)
- ensuring physical distance is kept (e.g. situating tables in restaurants at appropriate distance)
- increasing available space (e.g. allowing small businesses to operate outdoors and pedestrianising streets to enable that)
- rigorous hygiene practices including the use of PPE (by customers and staff alike) and supply of disinfectants at entry
- cancellation of group events (e.g. group classes in gyms)

¹⁵ The most commented-on idea relating to reopening businesses was pre-seeded by the Scottish Government and attracted 117 comments and was rated by 87 people: [Future changes affecting businesses that have been subject to restrictions or closure](#)

Some felt that non-public facing workplaces, in construction and manufacturing in particular, could reopen more easily with some social distancing and perhaps the use of face masks. There was a view that these workplaces are used to complying with Health and Safety regulations and often have health and safety officers so they are well positioned to follow any Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines that may be required.

There was also a suggestion that, at present, there is a lack of clarity among businesses as to which of them should be closed and which can stay open (with safe distancing in place). It was thought that many businesses that were currently closed could benefit from an advice line or business FAQ service, and for clear guidance to be provided to owners.

“I know a lot of businesses, particularly SMEs, have closed because of government messaging. Social distancing can be implemented at lots of workplaces that aren't obviously falling into the 'essential' category. Owners have shut down because they think they are being asked to, when actually they could still be working, and employing, with small simple changes to ensure safety. It penalises those people who are responsible, and who want to do the right thing, but who maybe don't have access to government or industry association advice. These businesses should be supported and enabled to continue. Maybe an advice line or a business FAQ to help?”

Support to workers and businesses

Respondents raised concerns about job security and the ending of the furlough scheme. Many felt that the furlough scheme was a 'lifesaver' and expressed a desire to see it extended.

“I've read many articles anticipating that the chancellor is preparing the furlough scheme to wind down from July. It scares me. I'm afraid if my employer makes me redundant as soon as the scheme ends. The scheme should extend until the economy comes back to normal when finding another job could happen.”

Echoing such feelings of uncertainty, a number of respondents expressed concern about the future of the furlough scheme in the context of possible divergence between the UK Government and the Scottish Government's approaches. There were worries about what happened in a scenario where the UK furlough scheme was discontinued due to restrictions being lifted by the UK Government, but where restrictions in Scotland remained.

Contributors welcomed that the scheme covered wages to up to 80%, but it was suggested that if the contribution were to drop this would bring about hardship.

“I employ part time staff. If furlough goes down to less than 80% most of these staff would be better off on universal credit.”

Some also called for various types of restrictions or conditions being applied to furlough schemes, both in terms of workers and employers. In terms of employers, it

was suggested “the very rich” should be prevented from making use of the scheme as “they can clearly afford to sustain payments for a number of weeks/months.”

Other key themes that were discussed in relation to supporting workers and businesses included:

- Widening the net of key workers – A number of respondents felt that restrictions on industries could be lifted gradually by slowly expanding the definitions of ‘key workers’ to include more and more jobs.
- Protecting returning employees – Concerns were raised about employees returning to unsafe working conditions. There was a view that returning employees should have a safe avenue to share and report any concerns they might have about their employer failing to adhere to safe practices.
- Supporting smaller businesses – There were calls for local businesses to be supported. It was felt that smaller enterprises were likely to be financially vulnerable in the current pandemic, but were also likely to be relied on by many – particularly in remote locations.
- Learning from businesses – Some suggested that the Scottish Government should liaise with businesses that have remained open and learn from them about what is feasible.
- Valuing key workers – A number of respondents expressed general appreciation and support for the NHS and key workers in general.
- Concern about public transport - There was some concern about the impact on public transport and a potential rise in the R number if large amounts of workers were returning to work. However, others were more optimistic, feeling that specific measures could be applied to reduce the risk of travel by train or bus. These included implementing clear distancing zonal areas (like supermarkets), encouraging staggered commuting times, and using technology to allow people to understand when services are likely to be quiet.

Views on support: considered by industry

There was much discussion about specific action that could be offered to different sectors of industry that have been impacted by the pandemic across Scotland. Contributors debated particular challenges faced by different sectors and explored potential solutions to a range of issues. Industries discussed included construction, manufacturing, housing, transport, tourism, the beauty industry, gyms and other leisure facilities, garden centres, dentists, and charity shops. A detailed summary of views on support for individual industries is provided in Annex A.

9. Future options for allowing pupils to return to school¹⁶

School closures, and options for how, and when, schools should return, were some of the most debated issues across the platform. Discussions centred around:

- When pupils should return to school
- How schools should look when pupils return
- Support for children learning from home
- Early years education
- Impact of school closures on children
- Financial impact of school and nursery closures

When pupils should return to school

Respondents' ideas largely fell into two categories on allowing pupils to return to school. Those who wanted schools to return as soon as possible, and those who wanted an early decision to be taken on schools not returning until after the summer break, or later.

Few felt that schools should return immediately, but many felt that they should be a priority in terms of how lockdown is lifted, both in terms of prioritising children's education and welfare, and in terms of being necessary in order for parents to work. Others were concerned that reopening schools could pose a high risk due to the challenges around maintaining social distancing. They argued that waiting until after the summer holidays could give an opportunity for the current risk to reduce and for schools and teachers to prepare the school environment and online resources. This view was frequently tied in with the request to take the opportunity to review how Scottish education is currently structured.

Some suggested that the school summer holidays should be started earlier than normal to allow pupils to return earlier than normal in August. In this scenario, the earlier return date would allow for pupils in transition years to have a "handover" period before the school year properly starts. There was also a suggestion of cancelling the summer holiday all together to allow pupils to return to their education as soon as feasible.

There was general support for a staggered approach to returning to school, with different groups returning to school at different times. Others were concerned about the practicalities of a phased return and how it could raise transmission levels if some pupils returned sooner than might be safe.

"Allow phased return, kids need school, some more than others. Schools need to be given enough time to plan how this will work for them. Every school will be different depending on layout, location and pupil roll, consideration should be given to this too. Parents also need as much notice

¹⁶ The most commented-on idea relating to reopening schools was pre-seeded by the Scottish Government and attracted 348 comments and was rated by 248 people: [Future Options for Allowing Pupils to Return to School](#)

as possible to prepare. Younger children should not be penalised because of their inability to social distance. Please consider this also.”

Some respondents felt that younger pupils should be prioritised for return to school due to the importance of early years education and to make it easier for parents to work from home. Others were concerned that P7 pupils need to be prepared for transition to secondary school, and suggestions included phasing that until the middle of the new term. Transition from nursery to primary schools was also highlighted as needing careful thought. There were a number of respondents who argued that pupils entering school exam years should be prioritised.

“Could pupils return to school in August and pick up where they left off? i.e. not moving up a class. They could do this until say October break or a suitable timeframe. P1's could be deferred starting school until after October break. It would mean cramming a lot in to a shorter period of time. I am a parent of a P7 and it concerns me that her next day of school could be high school with no preparation or transition period.”

There was disagreement and confusion over the level of risk posed to children, both in terms of catching the virus and the severity of symptoms and in terms of their risk of transmitting the virus to others. Some suggested that the schools and nurseries that have been open for key workers' children could be used to evaluate the transmission risk in these settings if they were opened up more broadly.

How schools should look when pupils return

There was some debate around whether children should repeat all or part of the school year – comments on this idea were polarised and there was little consensus reached. The idea seemed more popular among respondents with children due to undergo exams. Parents of those in P7 commonly supported some kind of transition phase between schools restarting and moving to high school. Repeating the year was also seen as a way to restructure and delay the start of primary school, with some feeling that Scottish children start school too early.

Suggestions for managing a safe return to school include:

- staggering the timings for the school day
- regular testing and temperature checks
- better ventilation of school buildings
- implementing hygiene training for pupils

The use of PPE within schools was debated, with some feeling it to be important to protect staff and pupils, and others arguing that it would be difficult to teach in a facemask and difficult for younger children to wear them correctly, and raising concerns that it could be frightening for children.

There was much discussion of alternative educational settings and venues that could be used to allow social distancing. This included a call for more outdoor learning such as “forest schools” or designated outdoor space and toilet facilities for nurseries and schools to use to minimise the number of children in classrooms at a given time.

There was also discussion of using community and third-sector premises such as church halls to allow for adequate spacing of desks.

There was a suggestion of restructuring primary school classes to create composite classes based around sibling groups. It was argued that this would be beneficial both for minimising transmission risk and in terms of educational outcomes.

It was suggested that in high schools, teachers should move around classrooms rather than pupils to help with physical distancing.

Respondents highlight that consideration will need to be made for how to support children with additional support needs, who may require more structure, or may need more physical contact from staff.

There was a suggestion that special arrangements should be made for children who are shielding, or whose families are shielding. A suggestion given was that these children could come in on a dedicated day, for example on Mondays after the school has been deep cleaned over the weekend and before other pupils arrive for the rest of the week. They should also be supported with continued home schooling.

Respondents raised concerns about possible staff shortages due to teachers being in the more 'at-risk' or 'shielded' groups, or needing to self-isolate. There was a suggestion of students in the final year of teacher training being supported to help. There was also a suggestion that teachers in more 'at-risk' groups could lead on home learning and those in lower risk groups could return to teaching in schools.

There were some calls to engage with children when taking decisions about how schools should return. Ideas included celebrating the work they have done in lockdown, for example by displaying the rainbow pictures online, asking children to draw what their ideal school would look like, and asking them what they like and dislike about the online teaching they have had.

Support for children learning from home

There was some concerns about the quality of remote teaching and online lessons. Many parents said they do not feel equipped to home educate. People noted that the quality of remote learning provision is variable depending on local authority area, with private schools often faring better. Online tuition and video conferencing were suggested as ways that teachers could continue to teach and develop education materials without physical classrooms.

There were differences in terms of people's expectations of teachers offering virtual classrooms. There is a perception about some teachers not doing enough, while others are concerned that creating a new home learning curriculum is a lot of work and that wellbeing should be the current priority. There was support for the idea of a national distance learning course for children to ensure consistency, and looking to UK and international best practice to support this.

There was support for ensuring better support for pupils using teaching tools like GLOW, Zoom, Moodle and virtual classrooms. There was concern about the

effectiveness of these tools for those who need additional support for learning. There was a concern about access to tablets/laptops and good internet access particularly in poorer household, and the potential for this to entrench inequality.

Early years education

There was discussion of the need to consider nursery age pupils as part of the discussion on schools returning. There was concern that if the decision is made to wait until after summer holidays to reopen schools, nurseries may not be considered separately, even if it becomes safe to reopen them sooner than August. It was argued that it is impossible to work from home while looking after nursery age children (harder than school age children), with parents having to work late into the evenings or early in the morning when their child is sleeping. It was argued that reopening nurseries will have a significant impact for parents and the economy. There was also concern about the fact that early years education is known to have a significant impact on future education and life chances.

“Having a nursery age child makes working from home impossible. If the need for social distancing reduces while the older kids are still on summer holidays then that should not prevent nurseries restarting. There is a lot of focus on when schools will go back, but school age kids are easier to cope with while also working from home so nurseries could be proportionately more important for getting the economy running again. Nursery age development is also incredibly important for long term educational and social outcomes.”

Many, however, argued that it is impossible to socially distance in a nursery setting. It was suggested that nurseries that are currently open for key workers' children could be studied to assess the risk of reopening nurseries more broadly. There was also the suggestion of supporting outdoor education or “forest schools” as a way of returning nurseries safely.

Impact of school closures on children

Many respondents were concerned about the impact the current restrictions will have on children's future education and life chances, as well as the more immediate effect on children's, young people's, and parent's mental health.

As noted, a number of parents described feeling ill-equipped to support home learning, particularly while also working from home. Parents also highlighted that children have not only been deprived of their schooling, but also with social contact with their friends, and particular concerns were raised about the distress caused by children not being able to see their grandparents.

Many of the respondents who raised these concerns advocated for schools to return as soon as possible. Others suggested that mental health support should be in place for pupils when they return, including training for teachers and school staff on how to spot early warning signs.

Financial impact of schools and nursery closures

The issue of childcare was raised. It was suggested that parents should be given time off from work if they are expected to provide teaching to their children at home and employers would need to be compensated for the hours lost:

“Younger children when not in the classroom need input. At least at the beginning of an exercise. Parents cannot provide this input if they are also working. Employers have a reasonable expectation that employees be productive.”

A number of comments were received about the financial impact on families of school closures. This included financial support for those who have to ‘home-school’ their children and are thus unable to work. A second suggestion was around relaxing school uniform requirements so parents did not have to pay for uniform they were not sure could be used yet.

10. Compliance, Enforcement and Policing¹⁷

The discussions about compliance, enforcement and policing are primarily split between contributors who advocate for stronger restrictions and more rigorous enforcement, and others who advocate for more individual freedom and agency to decide what to do. There were also some differing views as to whether current restrictions are 'rules' or 'guidance'. Many expressed frustration at those that are seen to flout the advice. Discussions on this topic related to:

- Tougher restrictions and policing
- Maintaining rights and freedoms
- Maintaining public trust

There was also some discussion around business compliance and how to keep staff and service users safe. This is addressed in chapter 8.

Tougher restrictions and policing

Those calling for tougher restrictions often linked these issues to measures such as enforcing social distancing, the wearing of face masks, and tighter travel restrictions. One of the more popular ideas related to the banning of spitting in public.

There were concerns that, over time, public compliance with social distancing measures is waning. People expressed concern at the number of people who are continuing to meet with friends and family, and people not being considerate to others in public spaces.

“Compliance with social distancing in shops is getting gradually poorer. More and more people feel comfortable pushing past others in close proximity.”

There was a suggestion that people should be encouraged to report those who are not following the official advice and that a dedicated hotline should be created for this purpose. Others were also strongly opposed to encouraging local “whistleblowing”.

In terms of travel restrictions, various contributors suggested there should be check points, and the police should be more active on the roads and checking reasons for journeys taken. Some commented on the perceived low presence of police cars on the roads and called for stronger presence.¹⁸

“... would be a visible sign that things are not back to normal yet and make people think twice about trips which are not necessary.”

However, there was a lot of opposition to this idea. One contributor suggested people should be issued with letters that allow travel outside – whether to go to work

¹⁷ The most commented-on idea relating to compliance and enforcement was pre-seeded by the Scottish Government and attracted 270 comments and 85 ratings: [Current Restrictions](#)

¹⁸ The most commented-on idea relating to police check points attracted 50 comments and 114 ratings: [Checking purpose of car journeys](#)

or to the supermarket – and these should be readily displayed in car windows when parked.

Fines were often suggested as a key tool for enforcement – for example for not wearing face masks (if it was made mandatory), visiting friends/family, and non-essential journeys. It was suggested the revenues should be used to support the NHS. A small number suggested jail time, but others felt this to be unrealistic or excessive.

However, it was acknowledged that some measures would be difficult to enforce or police and many argued that “police have better things to do” and limited resources are better spent elsewhere (on “serious matters”).

There were some differing views as regards the current restrictions, and whether these are “rules” or “guidance”.

“We should have proper RULES in place, not guidance.”

Maintaining rights and freedoms

A number of respondents felt that there is a delicate balance between maintaining compliance, minimising transition, and the preservation of a number of rights and freedoms. Some of those not in favour of additional police powers or tighter enforcement referred to human rights, arguing that:

“It is important to remember that the powers the police have and the current lockdown are already extreme in terms of human rights and freedom of movements.”

Measures such as police checkpoints on roads were suggested to be “a complete violation of a basic human right” and multiple contributors suggested they did not want to live in a “police state”.

Some argued that they feel as if they are treated as “children” by a “nanny state”, and were against a “penalty-based approach”. A popular idea was for Scotland to follow the Swedish model and to allow for more individual freedoms as opposed to restrictions and enforcement - “[the Scottish Government] needs to follow the Swedish example and trust the people to look after themselves.” Although the contributions in the thread were largely in agreement and in support of the Swedish model, others pointed out that Scotland and Sweden are not comparable (e.g. demographics, population density, single person households).

Maintaining public trust

It should be noted that many of those who advocated for tougher enforcement and policing did so on the basis that they thought that the public could not be trusted to abide by the restrictions.

“A lot of the public are proving that they can't be trusted, I came home to find 5 complete strangers partying in my garden. No permission, from 4 different households and 2 saying they were working as carers.”

However, a key theme among many respondents was the need to maintain a sense of mutual trust between the government and public as it continued to make decisions.

Some argued that restrictions and advice had been complied with well so far. However, they felt that many were struggling to keep complying with the current restrictions, and were consequently becoming increasingly restless for changes.

There was a sense among some that “the public should and can be trusted” to act responsibly and have a greater amount of agency to choose how to act. For example, to “see each other in a safe way” or to behave appropriately if “all shops [were] open with social distancing measures in place.”

Equally, some contributors expressed concerns that, should stricter or “more extreme” measures or too much policing be implemented at this stage, this would “breed resentment”, “alienate the public” and lead to people “losing complete faith in the government.”

“In order to maintain the trust of the Scottish people, the government needs to show that it trusts them. We are not stupid. We can follow the government advice without becoming prisoners in our own homes.”

A number of respondents suggested that if Scotland allowed a little more freedom (some relaxation around outdoor activities, exercise, and social contact), this would help to reinforce a sense of mutual trust with the wider public. As a result, these small concessions would ultimately make people more likely to comply with the larger complement of restrictions in the longer term.

“If you want continued compliance then give us some autonomy back.”

“Let's treat people with respect and trust and let them start getting back to a life that, whilst it might not be the same, is a least sustainable for the longer term.”

A small number, however, expressed concern that some measures to ease lockdown may make it harder to police – for example policing “social bubbles” could be very difficult.

11. Test, Trace, Isolate, Support

The Scottish Government ‘pre-seeded’ an idea on the platform as a prompt for discussions about the ‘Test, Trace, Isolate, Support’ strategy (TTI).¹⁹ This prompted discussions on the TTI strategy– including support, scepticism, and suggestions for how the strategy could be made most effective. It also prompted wider conversations about reducing barriers to testing within Scotland. The merits of a UK-wide approach to testing were discussed – including the use of a contact tracing app. Views were also shared on the need for increased antibody testing capacity.

Test, Trace, Isolate and Support Strategy

Many respondents indicated their support for the TTI strategy and felt that it represents the right way forward. However, it was clear that some support from respondents was also accompanied by a frustration that such a strategy had not been implemented consistently from the outset of the pandemic.

There was support behind the notion that testing should be available to all. Many respondents were supportive of mass testing of the entire population. It was argued that a mass testing exercise is essential for economic recovery, and necessary due to the large proportion of asymptomatic carriers. Others focussed on increasing testing capabilities in certain key locations – such as airports – to prevent new cases being imported from abroad.

There was also debate among respondents about how the TTI strategy should co-exist alongside other social restrictions. For many respondents, it is essential that TTI is in place and functioning before any restrictions are eased. However, there was a view that once TTI is in place, it could be introduced in tandem with the relaxation of certain social restrictions - for example, increased amounts of contact with family, friends, or small ‘bubbles.’ Some took a less cautious outlook, and felt that the introduction of TTI could mean that social distancing can be stopped completely.

“TTI needs to be in place and is essential prior to any lifting of any lockdown restrictions.”

Others disagree with social restrictions being eased as the TTI strategy comes into effect. They feel it is too early and risky to ease lockdown, even with TTI in place.

Respondents made a number of suggestions about how the TTI strategy should work in practice. These included suggestions that:

- individual households should keep track of their own “infection chain”
- testing must be offered locally at community level
- a TTI tracing app could be combined with manual tracing, with assistance from furloughed workers or volunteers.

¹⁹ The pre-seeded idea on “[Test, Trace, Isolate, Support](#)” attract 108 comments and was rated by 132 people

- people should carry “passports” or “cards” once tested and this would enable those who are sick to isolate and those who are well to return to “normal.”
- testing should be co-ordinated as quickly as possible – so that people do not get negative results, but actually then contract the virus during the time they were waiting for those results.

A small number of respondents argued that TTI should be backed up with legislation, and that the requirement to isolate if ill must be compulsory and policed, while others raised human rights concerns in regards to this. Similarly, there was a suggestion for enforced centralised isolation for those who tested positive for the virus – but others again raised human rights concerns around this, as well as highlighting how this could put people off self-reporting. It was also argued by some respondents that TTI won't be effective unless borders are closed or entrants quarantined or must isolate for 14 days.

Several respondents raised concerns around the economic impact on individuals who have to self-isolate as part of TTI, as some may have to do so repeatedly and may suffer financially. There is a concern that the requirement to isolate will disproportionately affect vulnerable and lower income groups. It was argued that unless financial support is available, many will not isolate.

There were calls for the Scottish Government to work with employers, unions, and workers to ensure fair work principles and protections are in place for people who have to self-isolate. This should also apply to those who are self-employed.

Alignment with UK

Many respondents feel a UK-wide approach must be taken in terms of TTI for consistency, as doing otherwise would lead to confusion and complications for populations - especially those that live near the Scotland-England border.

“Please agree with UK government approach, having differing systems will cause confusion.”

However, there is not universal agreement for consistency between the UK and Scottish Governments. Some feel the UK approach is unsatisfactory and that the Scottish Government should continue with their own approach for minimising the future transmission of the virus. Amid discussions that often cited the approaches of other nations, a number of respondents highlighted the New Zealand approach to reducing transmission.²⁰

Use of a contact tracing app

Many respondents spoke positively about the use of a digital app to facilitate contact tracing – especially if it was a UK-wide project.

²⁰ The New Zealand Government's 'Elimination Strategy' for Coronavirus (COVID-19) contains a combination of measures that relate to testing, rapid tracing, and isolation, which are situated within a four tier alert levels system. For more information, visit: <https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/tables/COVID-19-alert-levels-summary.pdf>

However, a large number of respondents raised ethical and logistical concerns about the app. A recurring concern was around privacy and data protection, with many respondents emphasising that they would not feel confident or comfortable using such an app until these privacy concerns were addressed by the Scottish Government. Other concerns included potential low take-up rates and some therefore felt that decisions to lift any restrictions should be dependent on a certain percentage of the population being registered on an app. Others shared worries about accessibility and a reliance on self-reporting.

“The privacy issues need to be fully addressed explained and again informed choices allowed to be made. I would probably use it but would want to have knowledge about what exactly the risks are both to my security and privacy.”

“I am a pensioner and find technology confusing. I do not take my phone out with me but just use it at home. I don't know anything about Bluetooth but would worry about my security of passwords for banking. Think a lot of people like me will find this hard.”

There were also reservations about the possibility that a contact tracing app could be vulnerable to biases which may only reinforce inequalities. There was a view that an app could exclude the elderly, the homeless, other vulnerable groups, or those with incompatible devices.

“The use of mobile phone apps would exclude a large amount of non-technical people including the elderly and those on low incomes, many of whom do not own mobile phones or Bluetooth enabled mobile phones. In addition many people may choose not [to] download apps due to security / privacy issues and the excessive drain on their mobile phones battery.”

Nevertheless suggestions to make the app more effective included:

- linking phones to medical records
- having the functionality to book tests through the app
- getting results via the app
- automatically alerting people if they need to self-isolate
- addressing privacy concerns

Antibody testing

Many saw antibody tests as a crucial part of the overall picture for Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing. Some called for antibody testing to be made more routinely available. While others took a stronger view, advocating that the success of TTI was dependent on the availability of high-quality antibody tests to the entire population.

There was a broad agreement for the idea that people who are confirmed to be immune could be given “immunity cards.”

12. Environmental impacts

Many respondents on the platform highlighted how a series of environmental issues were connected to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions. Some of the most discussed issues included:

- Waste management (recycling and waste sites)
- Hygiene in public spaces
- Climate change

Waste management (including recycling)²¹

A central concern in many contributions centred around a lack of access to local waste and recycling sites. This resulted in a large consensus of support for suggestions that advocated the reopening of sites in local areas.

Many highlighted an observed increase in fly-tipping and expressed concerns that a combination of good weather and lockdown measures were contributing to large amounts of waste being generated from home improvement, DIY, and garden projects. There were also concerns that a lack of access to waste management services left the public vulnerable to a variety of vermin and health-related issues. As a result, there were some calls for these sites to be considered an “essential service”.

“There’s massive amounts of flytipping and rubbish being dumped in my local area. The dumps could be reopened with no effect on infection rates if properly managed. The amount of waste being dumped will cause health issues and vermin.”

The feasibility of reopening waste and recycling sites in a safe way was debated. Concerns were expressed by some that reopening sites without a series of safety measures could lead to overcrowding and increased transmission risks. However, there was a shared belief among many respondents that sites could be managed with minimal risks – through physical distancing and PPE for staff.

“Would support reopening of recycling centres with appropriate guidance in place, including for example one person per vehicle. Reopening good for environment and trying to avoid unnecessary fly tipping.”

“Normally when you go to the recycle centres you need to wait in a queue till someone is finished anyway to get your car in, so there is less risk here and minimum adjustments required.”

Further practical suggestions to limit the site risks included:

- establishing a pre-booking appointment system
- operating a “one in, one out” system

²¹ The most commented-on idea relating to waste management attracted 90 comments and 260 ratings: [Consider reopening household waste/ recycling areas](#)

- limiting the number of cars/users allowed in at a time
- having certain days for specific waste, e.g. garden waste on Tuesdays, electrical waste on Wednesday
- providing staff with PPE

If it were not possible to reopen waste and recycling sites, some respondents suggested a solution could be to increase kerb-side waste collection. One idea called to reinstate normal kerbside collection with a perception that staff absence should now be low, although this was not a universal view.

“We must open recycle centres as soon as safely possible. Fly-tipping is becoming a major problem. Other possibility would be to increase kerb-side collections where possible, but I fully realise that this requires more resource use by local councils, and probably not possible at the moment.”

Some pointed out the difficulties faced by those who do not have a car in accessing waste sites and highlighted that the needs of the non-driving population should be considered in waste management policy.

There was also discussion around the lockdown as an opportunity to clear up litter on road verges.

Hygiene in public spaces

A number of respondents on the platform expressed their desire for increased levels of disinfecting of public spaces and council property. Some discussed how transmission risks were high on streets that were not appropriately cleaned. Others focussed on particular items of council property – such as green and blue recycling bins, which they felt posed serious risks of transmission. There was particular concern that wheelie bins were often returned to different households within a council area.

“You are taking bins used by an average of 8 different families in a close, not cleaning them, then returning these bins to a different 8 families to use! How exactly can that not be spreading the virus?”

There was debate about how rigorously public spaces could be cleaned in Scotland, and whether this would be an effective prioritisation of public resources at this time. Some used international comparisons of rigorous street cleaning as a way of suggesting that Scotland could do more. There was also ideas that the Scottish Government should enforce hygiene standards on local authorities (e.g. a regular deep cleaning of bins and public utilities).

However, some respondents argued that large-scale local operations to ‘deep clean’ or ‘disinfect’ public spaces may not be possible due to lack of resources. These respondents highlighted the need for increased future resource for councils.

“Councils need more resources to clean more. Cleansing services have suffered from years of cuts due to the perceived higher importance of schools and social work.”

Climate Change

Many respondents noted the way in which Coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions had brought a series of benefits for the environment. Some respondents felt lockdown provided an “opportunity” for Scotland to propose more “radical” climate action policies and discussions about how to continue to sustain the environmental benefits of the current situation. In particular, there were comments supporting the extension of working from home, for example by incentivising employers. There were views that active travel could be continually encouraged to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality. However, there was strong disagreement from a small number of respondents on these issues, who felt that this should not be a priority at this time.

13. Renew – A fairer and more sustainable Scotland beyond Coronavirus (COVID-19)

While many on the platform offered their views on the immediate priorities of the pandemic, there were a large number of respondents who also submitted ideas about wider action that could be taken to create a fairer and more sustainable future in Scotland beyond Coronavirus (COVID-19). There was support for the idea that the present lockdown provided an “opportune moment” to pause, reflect, and plan creatively for the future.

Ideas were advanced as tools for recovery, mechanisms for sustainability, or ways in which aspects of a future Scotland could be reshaped to be fairer. Among a range of areas for change advocated by respondents were:

- Public health
- City planning and transport
- Business norms and support
- Tourism
- Education
- Wider inequality
- Environmental policy
- Recognition for key workers

Public health

There was a general appetite for Scotland to learn lessons from Coronavirus (COVID-19) and ensure that it is better prepared for any future pandemics. For some respondents, there was an important question about investing in the health and social care sector.

For others, there was a need to make structural improvements to ensure that public spaces and interactions were more hygienic, and more equipped to minimise viral transmission in the future. Suggestions included the enforcement of higher hygiene standards in publicly accessible toilets - including “push to exit” doors and “touch free” flush/taps. Others suggestions advocated taking further steps to invest in becoming a “cashless” society using contactless and card payments.

“The government should work with businesses and banks to support a Cashless society, accelerate the use of contact less and card payments. This will reduce the risk of passing disease through notes and coins. It will also reduce the amount of people within bank branches, touching atms and queuing at banks and atms. Cashless transactions between teller and consumer are quicker and safer for all.”

There are also calls for wider campaigns focused on health behaviours as a preventative mechanism to improve the public’s immunity to viruses. Calls for improving Scotland’s health behaviours include suggestions to improve the Scottish diet, increase physical activity levels, and reduce obesity.

“One of the best protections against Covid is being in good health. Scotland has a major problem with obesity /poor diet and nutrition/ lack of fitness. Let’s encourage folk to Get Fit and Healthy (have a national campaign led by popular figures who may themselves have these problems) .”

City planning and transport

A number of respondents advocated for renewed energy in city planning.

Respondents discussed opportunities for the Scottish Government to do more to encourage increased levels of active travel in the long term. There was support from some for the development of new and improved infrastructure to facilitate different modes of active travel in towns and cities. There were also calls for investment into encouraging the take-up of electric bicycles and scooters (albeit with careful thought on impact for other road users).

“Many cities in Europe are using opportunity of low car use just now, to radically improve facilities for cycling and walking by converting existing roads (especially in and around towns) into car free areas. We must do likewise. People are going to be understandably wary of public transport post lockdown risking significant increase in car usage, pollution and environmental damage. If we want people to switch culturally and permanently to using bikes or walking etc we need proper car free routes that allow meaningful safe commuting; between residential areas and towns, within towns and between towns, like the Netherlands.”

While there were those that emphasised the importance of promoting forms of active travel, there were others who highlighted an opportunity to minimise the need for travel in the future. Among these respondents, there were several who particularly advocated the minimising of heavy traffic and congestion in urban areas.

“Gov should accelerate the Transport Bill to make pavement parking illegal now or bring in new powers under Covid.”

Business norms and support

Some respondents described how patterns of changes to working life throughout the pandemic had demonstrated the viability of remote home-working and communication via technology. It was argued that the Scottish Government could support employers to promote home-working in the future.

Many recognised that businesses were going to have to live with the legacy of the lockdown for the foreseeable future. It was suggested that the Scottish Government could create a competition or award to highlight the best practices that were supporting businesses, the arts, and community engagement during the post-lockdown period. Creative designs and innovations could be celebrated and then shared as guidance to others.

“Proposals would be invited from the community at large, architects, designers and existing businesses for conceptual ideas for businesses,

educational institutions, arts and community organisations which may need to redesign their premises or business model . Proposals would be particularly encouraged relating to sectors facing the biggest challenges – e.g. hospitality, leisure, adventure/ outdoor sports, environmental organisations, retail sectors, places of worship, schools colleges and universities.”

Other ideas included supporting small, local businesses and using this time to restructure food production in line with environmental goals. There were also suggestions related to teaching IT skills necessary for adapting businesses to the online marketplace. It was felt that a lack of technological knowledge had impacted certain businesses throughout the pandemic – particularly in the hospitality sector.

Some respondents felt that the Scottish Government should explore the benefits of shortening the working week. Practical issues to this were flagged including managing contractual agreements and maintaining services with fewer working hours.

Tourism

There were numerous suggestions that Scotland could use this time to re-evaluate its tourism and housing strategy. It was felt that tourism was overwhelming certain areas – such as Edinburgh, the Highlands, and certain islands – and that short-term lets needed to be controlled, so as to stem the rising number of displaced people. Displacement was considered to be a problem that would only be exacerbated further in a weakened, post lockdown economy.

Education

In addition to those who argued for a repeat of the school year, there were those arguing to delay entry into primary school permanently, as part of the perception that Scotland begins school too early.

In the longer term, there were calls for the Scottish Government to investigate and seriously consider new ways of schooling. Some felt that the current “one size fits all system” does not cater to the wide variety of educational needs in Scotland. Of those who supported a new educational approach, some argued for the freedom “to provide more apprentice type learning and focus on children’s strengths,” while others felt that there was an opportunity to “raise the school starting age and implement a Kindergarten stage.”

Wealth inequality

There was a stream of advocates for a basic income for all citizens. They argued that a universal basic income would reduce inequality, increase innovation, and be an alternative way for supporting society compared to existing benefits and relief schemes.

“It’s [UBI] a very interesting concept, and in the current situation, would have saved the invocation of the extremely expensive furlough scheme, which we’ll all be paying for via taxes, possibly for decades. If everyone had non-means

tested UBI (the costs involved in means testing and administering all the difference current schemes, whether under UC [Universal Credit] or not, are huge) in combination with a realistic tax system there would be many benefits. Definitely something worth looking at for the future.”

There was also support amongst some respondents for changes to taxes in Scotland. Several thought that the pandemic had demonstrated how governments needed higher levels of tax revenue to fund services.

“Rethink taxation. Many people seem to object to paying more tax and yet are happy to support a number of charities or the efforts of individuals like the now famous 'Captain Tom' to raise money for good causes. If all the working people of Scotland donated £1 per week to a new Social Fund we could raise £500,000,000 a year for the NHS, Social and Homecare workers and other important services. (and that's only half the total population).”

It was claimed that after the crisis many would be in increased indebtedness and that debt cancellation - similar to those in the wake of the Second World War - should be considered.

Environmental policy

Many were supportive of the idea that the lockdown offered an opportunity for the Scottish Government to pause, and begin to shift its approach on climate change.

“Many of us feel this is an opportunity to implement changes essential to Scotland meeting the zero carbon targets it has set itself. We don't want everything to ‘get back to, normal’, if normal means a return to high air pollution, dangerous levels of traffic and congestion, the inflexible busy-ness of ‘business as usual.’”

Some described how the pandemic had made the world more environmentally friendly, and there was a danger that the “new normal looks suspiciously similar to the old normal.”

There was also a call for a voluntary green tax to fund green transformation businesses and initiatives, which garnered both support and disagreement from other respondents.

“As part of the economic and social recovery, a voluntary green tax (1% of income) could be used to kick start and fund new environmental businesses, such as sustainable energy, clothing, food, travel. The government could then hold a 30% shares in these companies, and re-invest any profits back in to future emerging opportunities. I am suggesting a voluntary scheme, so not to increase taxation on the lowest income households.”

More on respondents views relating to climate change and wider environmental action can be found in the ‘Environmental impacts’ chapter.

Recognition for key workers

Many shared a view that Scotland needs to recognise the work and efforts of the key workers who had put themselves at risk throughout the pandemic.

“The current pandemic has shown us more than ever that our key workers are essential for keeping the wheels turning in all aspects of our lives, and also that the poor are disproportionately affected by the virus, with worse outcomes than in affluent areas. ‘Key workers’ are typically undervalued and underpaid and it would be great to see this addressed in the response to the pandemic. Along with making sure that everyone has enough money to eat and keep warm, the wealth inequality across the UK is quite simply an embarrassment, and should be utterly unacceptable to all.”

Annex A: Business support: views on specific industries

Construction – There were calls to allow the construction industry return as soon as possible once clear guidance is in place. There were views that construction sector workers could return to work more easily than other customer-facing workplaces. Some suggested that, given the construction industry was used to complying with Health and Safety regulations and often had health and safety officers in place, they were well positioned to follow any Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines that may be required. It was noted that the construction of the NHS Louisa Jordan proved that construction sites can operate safely during the pandemic. Not all comments were in support of the construction industry returning to work quickly however. Some noted that it would be hard to ensure compliance on sites. Others felt that reopening the construction industry would increase movements in other areas of the economy through dependencies with the construction sites' activities.

Manufacturing – Manufacturing was often mentioned in tandem with construction as another industry that could be opened relatively easily given the non-public facing nature of the work and the fact that it is used to complying with strict Health and Safety regulations. Some suggested that Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines could be quickly implemented (i.e. ensuring a two-metre distance between workers is maintained, that face masks are worn, and that there are additional measures for cleaning and hygiene in workplaces). It was also noted that certain key manufacturing operations have stayed open during the pandemic and that wider industry could learn from these companies how to ensure safety. One respondent noted that “manufacturing businesses with a production line and a need to transfer a product from hand to hand or to a retail business is clearly higher risk” but “ultimately many risks can be mitigated and the onus should be on allowing directors to find solutions for their business within a framework.”

Hospitality - The importance of hospitality was underlined by many in terms of its financial contribution and the amount of people employed within this industry. It was generally seen as one of the hardest hit industries in the current circumstances. The reopening of hospitality businesses was also linked to the idea of normal life resuming, especially as businesses such as cafes, pubs and restaurants are seen as important to social life. While some suggested that hospitality businesses are likely to be the last ones opening up, others argued that businesses such as pubs “will need to reopen in line with other retail establishments in order to protect businesses and jobs.” Those opposing the opening of hospitality businesses suggested it will be difficult to observe social distancing measures in pubs, restaurants and other establishments. However, suggestions were made for various ways in which these businesses could be operated safely:

- limiting how many customers are let into premises at any one time (most agreeing about 50-60%)
- making use of their outside spaces as it will be easier to socially distance outdoors
- pedestrianising certain streets so outdoor seating could be provided

Many commenters emphasised the importance of PPE and strict hygiene measures, for example:

“When we allow restaurants to open then we should position the tables at least 2 metres apart. Perhaps staff should all have masks and of course all tables should be cleaned with any bacterial sprays. Only disposable paper napkins should be used and of course only plates, cutlery and glasses cleaned in appropriate cleaning machines should be used. Perhaps only pre table bookings should be taken and of course payments by card only. It may well be that sittings of only up to 1.5 hours be allowed.”

Those who are more sceptical suggested that social distancing and strict hygiene procedures would not work in hospitality as “food still needs to be served by staff to customer (close contact) who have touched plates cutlery etc. and social distancing between staff [is] impossible in some restaurant set ups.”

There was also a suggestion that, while many in the hospitality industry would be eager to reopen as soon as possible, they should be given time to make in-premises preparations beforehand. It was suggested that owners and staff should be allowed in their premises early, so they were able to organise before they reopened to the public. It was felt that if each business had this time to prepare, they would find it easier to “adapt to new ways of working” and “implement COVID measures for the public.”

Housing market - There were a number of overlapping ideas about unfreezing the housing market and allowing removal companies to operate which generated fairly universal positive support. Overall, it was argued that property sales could reopen safely with appropriate safety guidance (e.g. ensuring only one property viewer at any time; viewers and sellers wearing gloves and face coverings and keeping two metres apart; increasing the use of video tours to reduce the number of unnecessary physical viewings).

The importance of the housing market to the economy was emphasised together with the difficult situation which the housing market freeze is putting many people in. People shared their own personal experiences, and expressed feeling “stuck in limbo.” Some compared Scotland’s housing market with England’s and felt that a more proactive approach in the South could result in companies in Scotland losing business.

“Removal companies still operate in England. My family plan to move from Southampton to Edinburgh (once builders are allowed to finish houses) We were thinking of using Scottish company but this restriction has made us have 2nd thoughts.”

Transport - Many described how driver-based services, such as taxis or driving instructors, would struggle to restore customer confidence until they had additional health protection measures in place. Specific ideas to enable driver-based businesses to reopen safely included installing plastic screens in cars and providing guidance to companies of practices that could help mitigate transmission risks in a car.

Tourism - Many are supportive of the idea that tourism could be opened up gradually, starting with parts of tourism where social distancing is most likely to be adhered to, including self-contained, self-catering holiday homes or caravans. This was perceived as low risk and would allow same household or 'bubble' groups to take breaks from cities, as well as boost local economies. It would also help those who pay large fees to be able to use caravan sites but currently cannot use them despite feeling they posed little risk. Other suggestions included initial banning of wild camping and opening up hotels but with reduced capacity. The counterargument raised was that it was too early to lift/relax restrictions on tourism because there are too many "ifs and buts" around this and this could produce more harm than good. There is a risk of increased infection rates in rural communities, especially if they hosted popular touristic hotspots, where NHS capacity may be lower than in urban areas.

International tourism – Some felt that travellers to the UK should be asked to prove they have recently tested negative instead of quarantining them, arguing that this would help tourism in Scotland.

Beauty industry (Hairdressers, beauticians, make-up artists, tattoo parlours) – The idea of opening up of hairdressers, barber shops and beauty salons or services of freelance make-up artists generated quite a number of contributions. Overall, it was argued that opening will help hairdressers economically, who tend to be self-employed, and that it will also be beneficial in terms of wellbeing for many people. It was felt that it would be feasible to sustain the existing restrictions and manage the risk of infection with sensible rules, procedures or with technology (text for appointments in advance to avoid queues).

“Sensible rules and procedures from Germany, we should do the same. Appointments, wear masks, improve cleaning, no dry cuts etc.”

However, there were also critical views, including from a person stating she owns several hair salons herself, doubting whether this could be done safely given that the nature of the industry requires close contact with clients:

“As a salon owner myself, I and many other friends and colleagues in the industry have massive fears about our return. The closeness of our job to other people is unavoidable, the virus living in hair, and transmitting in water vapour makes it completely impossible for us to wash, dry or even deal with hair in general, without feeling at risk. The price of PPE has rocketed for us, and knowing if it will continue to be available is a worry.”

Some argued that if hairdressers and beauticians are allowed to open so should tattoo parlours.

Gyms, sports centres and leisure facilities - Gyms were a popular topic of discussion on the platform, with quite opposing views being expressed: while some see suggestions to open gyms as unrealistic or “madness”, others argue it could be done safely. The mental health benefits of exercise are mentioned often. The ideas around measures to enable gyms to reopen included:

- limiting numbers of people accessing the gym at the same time
- rigorous hygiene practices
- cancellation of classes (i.e. only using equipment) or limiting the number of class attendees
- use of PPE
- booking time slots
- not opening showers/changing rooms
- temperature checks on entry

Some people also suggested that personal trainers (PTs) could be allowed to work on a one-to-one basis as it would be easier to maintain social distancing, and this would also help those who were self-employed PTs. One idea was concerned specifically with swimming in sport centres and it was accompanied with a suggestion of limiting numbers and time limits for use of the pool, and rotating use of changing facilities to allow for cleaning between customers.

Garden centres – Many respondents supported the opening of garden centres on the basis of the positive mental health impact of gardening and the increased time people spending in gardens due to lockdown. There was an argument that if hardware stores were able to be open, so should garden centres (using a similar model). There was also some suggestion of priority access to garden centres for the elderly (like at supermarkets). Concerns existed about how specific demographics that were likely to use garden centres may be higher risk (i.e. more older people). There was also a worry that there would be a “rush” on them if reopened. Some identified potential issues with maintaining social distancing at queues or were concerned that families will use them for a “day out” if they have animals/play areas. There was also concern that there are lower staff numbers in garden centres than supermarkets so it may be difficult to manage queues. There was a suggestion of click and collect services/open by appointment.

Dental services - Contributors noted that dental practices are regarded as businesses rather than as providing healthcare - “if dentistry were treated like healthcare we would recognise that leaving people with infections and in pain isn't acceptable.” It was widely suggested that because dentists and dental nurses are healthcare professionals they are fully aware of hygiene practices and able to minimise any risk of transmission. However, it was also suggested that practices need access to sufficient PPE and due to the issues in supply chains this could be hard to manage. Contributors also argued that dental services should be classified as an essential service, and that people should not be left to deal with pain and other issues without access to dental care. Owing to concerns about a growing backlog of patients, there was strong agreement that dental services should be made available as soon as possible.

Charity shops – There was an argument that charity shops are valuable for reducing waste and having a positive environmental impact (both in terms of reducing fly-tipping and in terms of people now being tempted to purchase online that they would otherwise buy second hand). It was also suggested that charity shops were important for people on lower incomes and provide important streams of revenue for charities. There was also an argument that charity shops could safely operate using the same protocols as food shops.

Annex B: Most engaged-with ideas

Table B.1 – Top 20 Ideas by number of ratings

Rank	Title	Number of ratings	Average rating ¹	Number of comments ²
1	Visiting other households	327	4.20	247
2	Continue Lock down	281	2.70	161
3	Consider reopening household waste/recycling areas	260	4.86	90
4	Allowing pupils to return to school	248	3.38	348
5	Close the Scotland/England border	237	2.92	103
6	Change the strategy - accept some risk.	205	4.11	81
7	Golf Courses	194	4.36	119
8	Allow participation in some outdoor, mostly solitary sports.	194	4.85	83
9	Gyms re opening	190	3.34	95
10	Golf reopening	180	4.48	69
11	Enforce the wearing of masks	174	3.03	81
12	Allow visits of partners	170	4.81	56
13	Quality of life	166	4.66	489
14	Allow access to outdoors	166	4.82	61
15	Open Garden Centres	141	4.73	57
16	Coronavirus (COVID-19): Test, Trace, Isolate, Support	132	4.52	108
17	Staying at home advice	128	4.62	118
18	Allow grandparents/family members as childcare	126	4.56	70
19	Resume Dental Treatment	121	4.87	43
20	Socially Distant Sports/Activities	120	4.94	39

Notes

1. Number may differ from the website due to rounding
2. Number of comments published on the website

Table B.2 – Top 20 Ideas by number of comments

Rank	Title	Number of ratings	Average rating ¹	Number of comments ²
1	Quality of life	166	4.66	489
2	Allowing pupils to return to school	248	3.38	348
3	Current restrictions	85	4.14	270
4	Visiting other households	327	4.20	247
5	Businesses that have been restricted or closed	87	4.21	177
6	Continue Lock down	281	2.70	161
7	Golf Courses	194	4.36	119
8	Staying at home advice	128	4.62	118
9	Coronavirus (COVID-19): Test, Trace, Isolate, Support	132	4.52	108
10	Close the Scotland/England border	237	2.92	103
11	Gyms re opening	190	3.34	95
12	Consider reopening household waste/recycling areas	260	4.86	90
13	Allow participation in some outdoor, mostly solitary sports.	194	4.85	83
14	Change the strategy - accept some risk.	205	4.11	81
15	Enforce the wearing of masks	174	3.03	79
16	Golf reopening	180	4.48	69
17	Allow grandparents/family members as childcare	126	4.56	70
18	Allow Angling	98	4.76	69
19	Allow access to outdoors	166	4.82	61
20	Resumption of Golf	95	4.51	57

Notes

1. Number may differ from the website due to rounding
2. Number of comments published on the website

Annex C: Platform engagement - quantitative overview

The following annex provides a quantitative summary of user engagement on the platform between 5 and 11 May 2020.

Headline figures:

4254 ideas were submitted to the platform. 132 ideas were rejected due to being in breach of the [moderation policy](#) and **4122** ideas were published on the site. **17,966** comments were posted. These came from **11,692** registered users, of whom **3,274** submitted ideas. Members of the public also engaged with the Scottish Government by email and **136** emails received during the challenge were also included in the analysis.

Engagement by topic – topic tags, comments, and ratings

The following tables show the total number of comments and ratings for each ‘topic tag,’ ordered by chapter and sub-themes within the report. This is to provide a sense of the level of engagement around different topics across the report.

‘Topic tags’ were assigned by researchers and moderators to the idea threads created by contributors (for example, if a contributor raised an idea about dental health, the tag ‘dental health’ would be applied). These ‘tags’ formed the basis of a thematic coding framework which allowed researchers to structure an analysis of the responses.

These figures, detailing the number of comments and ratings by ‘tag,’ offer a high-level outline of the scale of discussion and engagement for individual subjects. For example, they can be used to demonstrate that high numbers of respondents engaged – via either a written comment or rating (out of 5 stars) - with subjects of ‘outdoor activities,’ ‘social contact,’ and ‘business re-opening.’

Note: As ‘topic tags’ were used to code idea threads by theme only, the values in these tables **cannot be used to gauge any sense of agreement or disagreement** on a particular subject. The values in this table can be interpreted to gauge the scale of engagement alone.

When an ideas thread contained a number of different concepts, **multiple** ‘topic tags’ were applied by researchers to the same thread (for example, an ideas thread which contained a multi-theme discussion could be assigned tags on ‘exercise,’ ‘mental health’ and ‘social contact’ at the same time).

As a result, the number of comments and ratings per ‘topic tag’ provided in this set of tables should not be added together to identify overall numbers of engagement by theme.

4. The Scottish Government's approach to the pandemic			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>How lockdown should be lifted</u>	'lockdown restrictions'	74	201
	'maintain lockdown'	119	298
	'herd immunity'	21	46
	'exit strategy'	877	2,352
	'phased lockdown removal'	55	136
	'r number'	355	764
	'timeline'	357	280
	'transition/transition arrangements'	23	60
	'transparency'	169	405
	'tourism'	146	262
<u>Divergence with UK approach</u>	'SG approach'	760	1,840
	'devolved administrations'	192	461
	'border control'	344	693
	'UK Government'	550	1,190
<u>Regional variation</u>	'regional variation'	502	1,047
<u>Official communications</u>	'official communications'	657	1,079
<u>Evidence base</u>	'evidence base'	761	1,170
	'expert advice/expert input'	49	120
	'science community/scientific community/scientific advice'	48	155

5. Future changes to advice about staying at home			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>Allowing socially distanced outdoor sports</u>	'exercise'	1,959	4,168
	'outdoor activities'	3,232	6,868
	'individual sport'	39	92
	'organised sport'	63	189
	'golf'	863	2,092
	'fishing'	39	101
	'horse riding'	0	5
	'water sports'	135	305
	'tennis'	19	68
<u>Use of parks and outdoor spaces</u>	'park/parks'	9	23
<u>Travel</u>	'travel'	971	2,634
	'travel restrictions'	1,139	1,739
	'island travel'	169	290
	'plane travel'	24	55
<u>Face Masks</u>	'face masks'	773	1,161
<u>Reopening places of worship</u>	'places of worship re-opening'	45	117
<u>Reopening garden centres</u>	'garden centres'	16	65
<u>Allowing travel to second homes</u>	'holiday provision'	64	156
	'second homes'	221	484
	'caravan'	245	493

6. Changes to advice about visiting other households			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>Social contact</u>	'social restrictions'	1,375	3,042
	'social contact'	2,136	4,553
	'social distancing'	1,126	2,731
	'physical distancing'	790	2,021
	'single-person households'	157	390
	'single person households'	9	44
	'responsible adults'	678	913
	'loneliness'	529	1,142
	'freedom'	189	487
	'mass gathering/mass gatherings'	47	106
<u>At risk groups</u>	'at risk/at risk groups'	233	488
	'age'	216	484
	'disability'	33	111
	'vulnerable groups'	1,006	1,254
<u>Shielded group</u>	'shielding'	239	611

7. Options for resuming care and support for those most affected by the current restrictions			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>Wider health impact of living in the lockdown</u> and <u>Wider health services</u>	'mental health'	2,670	6,446
	'wider health'	33	111
	'dental care'	1,006	1,254
	'NHS Capacity'	239	611
	'hospital response'/hospitals response'	49	155
	'health sector response'	15	35
	'reopen hospitals'	15	42
<u>Care homes</u>	'care homes'	114	286

8. Changes affecting business that have been subject to restrictions or closure			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>Practical step on reopening businesses</u>	'businesses re-opening'/'business re-opening'	2,439	5,144
<u>Support to workers and businesses</u>	'business support'	220	601
	'social security'	89	238
	'furlough'	92	308
	'key workers'	154	404
	'unemployment'	28	106
	'economic uncertainty'	407	462
	'employment law'	395	325
	'basic income'	84	260
	'migrant workforce'	0	10
<u>Views on support by industry</u>	'personal services'	45	102
	'hairdressers'	39	80
	'pets'/'dog grooming'	112	252
	'hospitality'	164	370
	'caravan sites'	245	493
	'pubs'	14	34
	'construction sites'	114	390
	'retail'	49	149
	'supermarkets'	21	53
	'garden centres'	16	65
	'public transport'	224	593
	'tourism'	181	324
	'housing'	140	440

9. Future options for allowing pupils to return to school			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>When pupils should return to school</u> and <u>How schools should look when pupils return</u>	'schools'	299	705
	'schools re-opening'/schools returning'	2,064	2,979
	'school holidays'	35	78
	'repeat year'	38	88
<u>Support for children learning from home</u>	'home schooling'	56	113
	'on-line teaching'	1	3
<u>Early years education</u>	'pre-school'	111	258
	'under 10s'	6	14
	'childcare'	192	566
<u>Impact of school closures on children and</u> <u>Financial impact of schools and nursery closures</u>	'school closures'	44	87
	'vulnerable children'	53	160
	'exam level pupils'	1	14

10. Compliance, enforcement, and policing			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>Tougher restrictions and policing</u>	'compliance'	1,020	1,566
	'enforcement'	1,064	1,605
<u>Maintaining rights and freedoms</u>	'civil liberties'	193	371
	'human rights'	40	120
	'responsible adults'	678	913
	'acceptable risk'	61	223
	'freedom'	189	487
<u>Maintaining public trust</u>	'public trust'	305	732
<u>Business compliance</u>	'business compliance'	34	121

11. Test, Trace, Isolate, and Support (TTI)			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>TTI</u>	'titi'	837	1,541
	'test'/ 'testing'/ 'testing initiatives'	340	887

12. Environment impacts			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>Waste Management</u>	'waste management'	212	884
<u>Climate Change</u>	'climate impacts'	94	333
	'sustainability'	200	594

13. Renew – a fairer and more sustainable Scotland beyond Coronavirus (COVID-19)			
Sub-theme	Topic tag	Total comments	Total ratings
<u>Public Health</u>	'Public hygiene'	38	75
<u>City planning and transport</u>	'travel'	922	2,441
	'plane travel'	24	55
	'island travel'	162	277
	'travel restrictions'	423	1055
	'traffic'	70	206
	'public transport'	203	523
<u>Business norms and support</u>	'home working'	173	592
	'business support'	199	549
<u>Tourism</u>	'skills offer'	2	8
	'tourism'	146	262
<u>Education</u>	'repeat year'	38	88
<u>Wealth inequality</u>	'income'	85	282
	'social security'	13	38
	'basic income'	83	251
	'tax'	54	156
<u>Environmental policy</u>	'climate impact'	94	333
	'sustainability'	200	594



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