



PRESS RELEASE

SCOTSS Press release

Public Health - Coronavirus (embargoed 15<sup>th</sup> July)

**Highlighting the local authority regulatory services response during the Covid pandemic in Scotland.**

Since the Scottish Government tasked Scottish local authorities with the enforcement of The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, their Environmental Health and Trading Standards (EH&TS) teams have responded to record numbers of requests for help and advice from business, and enquiries and complaints around compliance.

Tailored advice has been provided to over 4000 businesses arising from 15,000 compliance assessments by EH&TS officers. In addition, local authorities have received 5500 complaints and enquires from business and the public with concerns that businesses are operating when they should not or did not have in place the necessary physical distancing provisions, and some 2000 business requests for assistance. This work generated a further 4800 replies and visits to businesses. It is a measure of the success of this work that only 271 warnings have been issued to businesses. Of those, only 13 required further enforcement action where a Prohibition Notice was issued for each business to close.

Social Media has been key in providing information with some 550 posts from local authorities providing updates on changes to the regulations and guidance and what these mean for our communities.

As Phase 3 of reopening moves forward this week this demand is likely to increase. Officers will continue this work as they monitor the reopening of indoor shopping centres and ensure the hospitality and tourism sectors can reopen safely.

Brian Lawrie, Chair of the Expert Officers group made up of EH&TS professionals from across Scotland, Police Scotland and HSE, set up to coordinate the Scottish response, said

“There has been unprecedented demand on Scottish local authorities over the past 4 months, as these figures demonstrate. It is also a measure of how seriously businesses take the issue of preventing the spread of the virus and operating and reopening safely that so many have sought out our help to do so. This reflects the proportionate approach taken by EH&TS officers in following a policy of Engage, Explain and Encourage with businesses. Enforcement has only been needed in a handful of serious cases. I have no doubt businesses will continue to do so, and our officers will be

available to provide the help they need, whilst providing assurance to communities that appropriate measures are in place to protect public health .”

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

For press queries, email [coordinator@scotss.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@scotss.org.uk) or [manager@socoehs.com](mailto:manager@socoehs.com)

1. Local Authority Environmental Health and Trading Standards services are authorised to enforce Regulations 3 and 4 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus)(Restrictions)(Scotland) Regulations 2020. The regulations contain a list of all premises that must be closed and the requirement on business to take all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing of their staff and the public on their premises.
2. The Expert Officer group was created by the Society of Chief Officers of Environmental Health in Scotland (SoCOEHS) and The Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland (SCOTSS) at the request of CoSLA. The purpose of this group is to ensure the delivery of a coordinated approach across all 32 local authorities, promoting consistency in the application of the new Regulations, supported by a joint Memorandum of Understanding with Police Scotland and the Health and Safety Executive.
3. In addition to the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, Scottish local Authority Environmental Health Services have a wider responsibility for regulating health and safety and are the main regulator for retail, wholesale distribution and warehousing, hotel and catering premises, offices, and the consumer/leisure industries.
4. SCOTSS is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC047951) with members representing every Scottish local authority trading standards service.
5. SoCOEHS is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC048937) with members representing every Scottish local authority environmental health service.
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