

## Roadmap out of lockdown: Scotland and Wales

**First Ministers Nicola Sturgeon of Scotland and Mark Drakeford of Wales have outlined their country's roadmap out of lockdown. We explore what employers should know below:**

- In Scotland, pupils in primary years 1-3 returned to the classroom from 22 February 2021; from 15 March 2021, years 4-7 will also return and secondary school pupils will begin a combination of online and classroom learning.
- From 5 April 2021, people will no longer be required to stay at home, schools will reopen fully, and click and collect will resume.
- From 26 April 2021, Scotland will return to a levels system with the aim of placing the whole of Scotland into level 3. On this date, non essential shops and leisure centres will be allowed to reopen – e.g. gyms, pubs, retail, and restaurants.
- In Wales, children aged between 3-7 have returned to the classroom since 22 February 2021.
- Stay at home rules will be reviewed on 12 March 2021.
- It may be possible for non essential shops to reopen from 15 March 2021; but on this date, other primary school children and some secondary school pupils will be allowed back into the classroom.
- All pupils may be able to return to the classroom after the Easter holidays.
- Homeworking advice has not changed in either of the countries – people should continue to work from home where possible.
- Both Sturgeon and Drakeford have expressed that easing lockdown will be cautious and dependent on coronavirus data.

### Gender pay gap reporting deadline pushed back

Enforcement action against employers failing to report their gender pay gap was suspended for year 2019/20 in March 2020 due to the pandemic. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has announced that this will re-start on 5 October 2021; those required to produce a report therefore have an extra six months to do so before enforcement action is considered. Employers are encouraged to submit data before October if possible.

#### Did you know?

This update will likely be seen as good news for employers who are still struggling due to the pandemic; it gives them an extended period of time to analyse the appropriate data and prepare their reports.

### Government's new site for modern slavery statements

On 23 February 2021, the Home Office launched a new registry service on the Government's website that allows all employers to publish their modern slavery statements for public viewing, including those who are not currently obligated to produce a statement. For now this feature will be voluntary, but legislation to make this compulsory is expected at some point in the future.

#### Did you know?

Employers must publish a statement on their website each financial year if their annual turnover exceeds £36 million, and other criteria are met. This new feature will boost transparency and prompt employers to take action against modern slavery.

### Employee fairly dismissed for not wearing a facemask

An employment tribunal has found that an employer fairly dismissed an employee for not wearing a facemask. The employer's employee handbook sets out rules on behaviour which includes that client instructions on PPE must be followed; however, the employee refused to wear a facemask as requested by a client whilst on their site. As a result of this, and the employer following a fair procedure, it was held that dismissing the employee was a reasonable response.

#### Did you know?

The employer's disciplinary rules put them in a good position to achieve a fair dismissal, as well as having acted reasonably in the specific circumstance.

England, Scotland and Wales' roadmaps all focus on data not dates. Still, employers across all three nations will now be able to plan for the future as much as possible. For further advice, contact our 24-hour Advisory Service for up-to-date guidance on this and more.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.