**Covid-19 and Islands**

***Scottish Islands Generally, Scotland***

1. What actions are being taken to protect the island community from Covid 19? In particular, how are travel restrictions being put in place and enforced?

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| Respondent | Date | Response |
| Ann MacDonald  Director  Scottish Islands Federation  [ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com](mailto:ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com) | 17 April 2020 | * Restrictions were formally put in place on 22 March for ferry travel to all islands. Calmac have stopped taking bookings until 16 July. These restrictions have been left by and large to Calmac and Northlink to manage. The reliance on production of a utility bill as evidence allows second home owners to travel post ban which is contrary to SG instructions. A utility bill is not evidence of normal residency. Many would have preferred driver’s licence or the electoral roll. Port staff have been left to act as arbiters. In response to concerns from island communities, Transport Scotland announced in w/c 6 April that police would be available to monitor the situation at ports. Ferry operators have reported large decreases in traffic and a number of potential ineligible travellers being turned away. Islands also report a notable number of people having travelled against the official instruction. There is anecdotal evidence of local police and community council authorities visiting second home owners prior to the lock down and suggesting those visitors might be better in their primary residence, to take the strain off local medical resources and food supplies. * Message from Calmac: *“From Sunday 22 March 2020, until further notice, ferries will be for those who live on our islands, who have an essential need to travel to or from the mainland and for essential supplies or business. Nothing else… Only if a prospective traveller can evidence that they are either an island resident, a key worker or travelling to provide medical support to family members will they be sold a ticket and permitted to travel… Business and freight can continue to use the services...”* * Plane links have been restricted – see Loganair announcement [here](https://www.loganair.co.uk/our-story/latest-news/2020/covid-19-loganair-announces-further-flight-reductions). Scotland's airline Loganair today announced a further drop in the number of flights due to the increasing impact of the coronavirus. With forward bookings continuing to fall dramatically versus their previous levels, the airline has enacted an overall reduction of over half of its flying programme for April and May. |

1. What actions will be taken should people on the island have Covid 19?

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| Ann MacDonald  Director  Scottish Islands Federation  [ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com](mailto:ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com) | 17 April 2020 | * Most islands do not have testing facilities, so diagnosis is on the clinical experience and knowledge of the island medical teams. In most cases where Covid is suspected, the actions have followed the Scotland wide advice for the patient to stay at home for 7 days and for the household to self isolate for 14 days. Field hospital or medical assessment and treatment centres have been set up on some islands including Barra and Tiree. Provisions are in place for severely affected patients to be flown by adapted planes or military aircraft to mainland hospitals. |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure that essential goods and services are provided to the island community?

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| Ann MacDonald  Director  Scottish Islands Federation  [ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com](mailto:ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com) | 17 April 2020 | * Scottish Government is working closely with communities and transport providers to ensure that essential goods and services continue to be delivered. There have been reported shortages of heating fuel, mainly caused by supply disruption and weather delays to ferries. The low cost of fuel has also led to bulk buying in advance anecdotally leaving others short of fuel when they need to order. The SG Islands Team works closely with Food and Drink, Transport and Marine Scotland colleagues to ensure that islands are supplied. Ferry timetables have been adjusted as the need arises to deliver food and fuel. Food supplies after initial shortages everywhere have steadied. A number of smaller islands experienced supply issues caused by small ferry operators experiencing difficulties from harbours being shut or self-isolation. These issues now have work arounds using different harbours or personnel. The SG Islands Team have worked hard with the Scottish Wholesalers Association to review supply chains to shops which service all 90 inhabited islands and to identify possible back up supply routes. Scottish Islands Federation personnel have worked with the Co-op group to identify concerns on relevant islands. The issue of “purchaser not present” when having to use credit cards has caused some difficulty when shopping for shielded groups in Co-op stores but it is hoped this will be solved by a trial in Wales being rolled out in Scotland. * Community care and support groups have sprung up throughout the islands, providing support for shielded vulnerable groups, shopping and delivery of essential supplies. * SG and MS are in discussion with a wind turbine manufacturer to enable maintenance crews to travel to islands to maintain vital community wind turbines. * Assurances have been given that lifeline air routes remain open for all islands with suitable landing strips. A&BC have made available Oban airport if required. |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure that people working on the islands, not only in the tourism sector, are sustained financially in the short term and in the long term?

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| Ann MacDonald  Director  Scottish Islands Federation  [ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com](mailto:ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com) | 17 April 2020 | * A wide range of financial support and grants has been introduced by the Scottish Government since mid March. SG have responded to criticism from specific industries and groups regarding coverage and people falling between the gaps, and on 15 April introduced further support. The first payment to support the fishing <12 metre boats are starting to come through. Queries remain on the coverage of the Coronavirus Business Support Fund for self catering properties (140 day let condition is very high for islands) and more details are expected by the end of April on this and the scheme for newly self employed and those failing between the gaps. Full details of the support can be found on the SG page <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/> |

1. What actions are being taken to ensure the mental well-being of people on the islands?

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| Ann MacDonald  Director  Scottish Islands Federation  [ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com](mailto:ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com) | 17 April 2020 | * Mental health is continually stressed at First Minister’s briefings. Support is planned and details are in the above link. As lock down continues this aspect will become increasingly important, especially for small elderly communities unable to attend funerals, meet with family or life-long friends. |

1. If you consider it appropriate, feel free to share any data about people who have Covid 19 on your island and of people who, sadly, have passed away because of Covid 19.

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| Ann MacDonald  Director  Scottish Islands Federation  [ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com](mailto:ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com) | 17 April 2020 | * On Tiree, approximately 20 households have self isolated with one or more member diagnosed by doctors (but not tested) as having Covid 19. Last case was 4 days ago (13/4) and the source of infection has been identified. It is hoped the island will be clear in 2 weeks’ time. 2 reported deaths on Arran and 2 on Orkney. Other cases on islands are difficult to identify as there is no community testing, testing is reserved for health care workers displaying symptoms. Shetland is slightly different and more are being tested because of the relatively large confirmed outbreak in that island grouping. 2 deaths have been reported in a care home on Shetland and it would not be unreasonable to expect similar deaths in care homes elsewhere on islands in due course. |

1. If applicable, how are the lockdown measures being relaxed?

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| “Island ferry restrictions could stay in place after wider lockdown is lifted”  West Highland Free Press | April 2020 | * Article - “Island ferry restrictions could stay in place after wider lockdown is lifted” - Read [here](https://www.whfp.com/2020/04/27/island-ferry-restrictions-could-stay-in-place-after-wider-lockdown-is-lifted/) |

1. Is there anything else you want to share?

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| Ann MacDonald  Director  Scottish Islands Federation  [ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com](mailto:ann.macdonald@tireebroadband.com) | 17 April 2020 | * Islands are starting to think of exit strategies for after the strict lock down is lifted. The current lock down is in place until at least 7 May. Many islands are wary of introducing infection having managed to stay or become free of Coronavirus. The issues for islands remain, an above average age of population and limited medical supplies. Infection from any second or subsequent wave would have as much impact, if not more, than the first nationwide wave. Potentially there is little herd immunity on those islands who have successfully locked down and either prevented the introduction of the virus or removed it after small scale infection. Testing, tracing and isolation would work well on smaller islands but possibly more difficult on large disparate island groups, for example mainland Shetland with many outlying islands and communities and many external transport links. Quarantine for arrivals may be one solution to be considered. |

1. Resources

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| Resource | Date | Link |
| “Michael Gove suggests Scotland's islands could become pilot areas to lift lockdown restrictions at quicker pace”  The Herald | 29 April 2020 | Read [here](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18414414.michael-gove-suggests-scotlands-islands-become-pilot-areas-lift-lockdown-restrictions-quicker-pace/) |

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*This information has been collated by the Strathclyde Centre for Environmental Law and Governance in collaboration with Island Innovation and can be found at* [*https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/ourwork/research/labsincubators/eilean/islandsandcovid-19/*](https://www.strath.ac.uk/research/strathclydecentreenvironmentallawgovernance/ourwork/research/labsincubators/eilean/islandsandcovid-19/)*.*