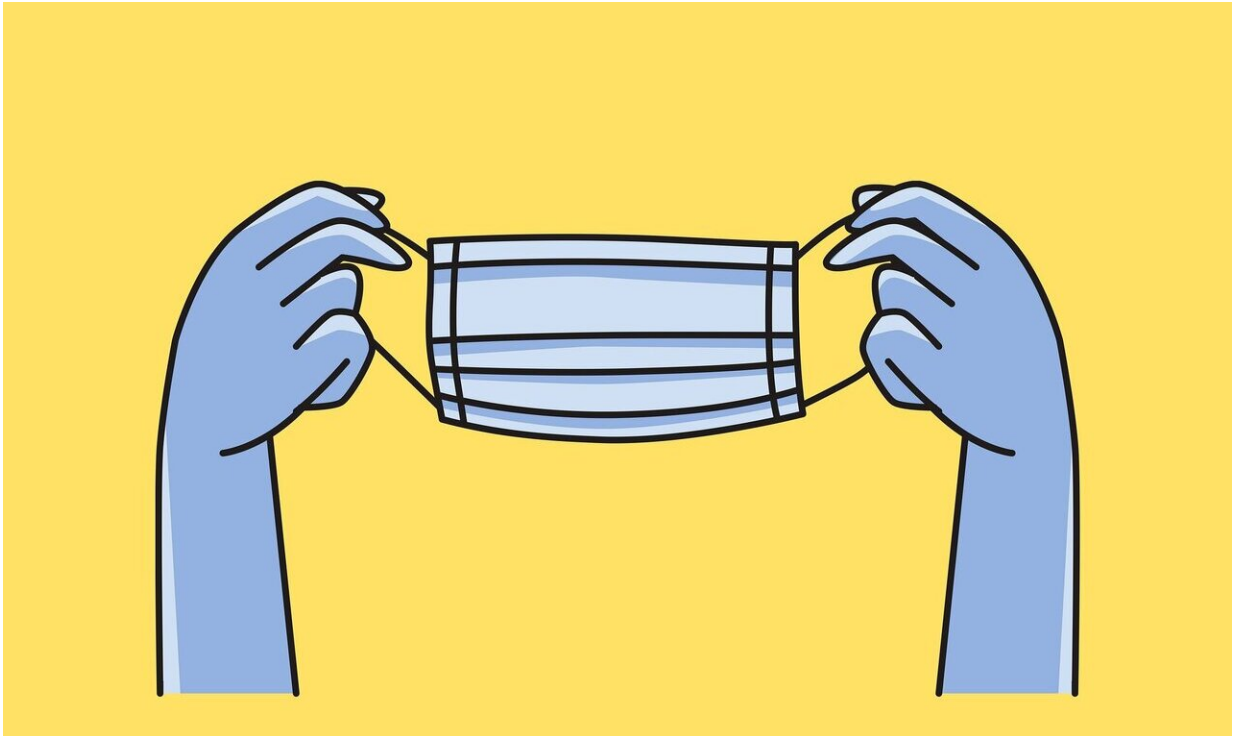


N.Ireland, Scotland set for more virus curbs

November 20 2020



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Northern Ireland shops, pubs and restaurants will shut for two weeks in efforts to curb the coronavirus, the British province announced, on the eve of Friday's partial reopening of businesses.

Cafes, hairdressers and beauty salons were permitted to unlock their doors on Friday as five weeks of limited "circuit-breaker" restrictions in

the province expired.

But starting on November 27, they will have to close again.

Pubs and licensed restaurants which had been slated to reopen on that same date will also remain shuttered for a further two weeks until December 11.

Non-essential retail outlets will close and there will also be limits on household gatherings with citizens told to stay home and work from home "if at all possible".

Schools across Northern Ireland, which is home to 1.9 million, are to remain open under the plan agreed by assembly ministers in Belfast on Thursday evening.

Northern Ireland's First Minister Arlene Foster said the region faced "the sobering prospect of our hospitals becoming overwhelmed within weeks".

"It is clear that a tough, carefully timed, intervention is required to give us the best chance to have a safe and happy Christmas and further into the new year period," she added.

There have been 901 deaths from the [coronavirus](#) in Northern Ireland, according to latest official data.

A total of 79 have died in the last week alone in the province, which has suffered some of the highest infection rates of anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Elsewhere in the UK, swathes of western and central Scotland prepared to enter a three-week period of restrictions on Friday evening.

From 6:00 pm (1800 GMT) non-essential shops, hospitality, gyms and beauty salons will shut in 11 council areas including the most populous city of Glasgow.

Schools are to remain open under the measures, also in place until December 11.

Earlier this week, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said the new curbs were "unpalatable but necessary".

England comes out of a partial lockdown in December. The UK as a whole has been one of the worst hit by the outbreak, with nearly 54,000 deaths from some 14 million cases.

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