

Learner drivers in limbo under the SNP

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Driving instructors have demanded clarity about going back to work, and are being left in “limbo” as their counterparts in England return to action.

Lessons and tests south of the border will be able to resume from July 4, the UK Government has confirmed.

But the Scottish Government has still to issue guidance, even though other businesses which involve more physical contact have been given the green light.

Glenn Norris, an instructor in Ayrshire, said the uncertainty was damaging both for the industry and people who need to gain a licence in order to work.

The Scottish Conservatives have backed his calls, and urged the SNP government to engage with the sector and give it a date for return.

Mr Norris, who runs the Glenn Norris Driving School in Cumnock, said: “We’re raring to go – we’ve got facemasks, gloves, sanitiser, steriliser, everything to make the instructor and the learner driver safe.

“But we don’t have any clarity. For some reason, hairdressers are able to go back in July, and that involves significantly more contact than our business.

“We don’t have any contact with the learner driver, and I’ve even got a thermometer and steam cleaner to make sure everything is as safe as possible.

“As an industry, we’ve been using this time to prepare for going back, but we’re not hearing anything from the Scottish Government.

“It’s frustrating for us and for people who have been waiting months for lessons and a test.

“And even when we go back, no-one will be able to go straight into a test after four months, so we will need at least three weeks to get drivers ready for that test.”

Scottish Conservative MSP Oliver Mundell recently asked transport secretary Michael Matheson about the issue.

However, in his parliamentary answer, he failed to give any assurances to the industry.

Scottish Conservative MSP Oliver Mundell said:

“There’s no need to keep driving instructors and their clients waiting any longer.

"This will resume in England from next week, yet here the SNP government is keeping them in limbo.

"That has a negative impact both on the finances of driving instructors and test centres, but also keeps young people waiting for months on end.

"Many of these people will need a licence for work, and this unnecessary delay only damages their prospects further at an already difficult time.

"The SNP needs to give this industry clarity and get instructors back out and on the road."