

Sturgeon's 2-week lag a blow for tourism

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Nicola Sturgeon's delay in opening up Scotland's hospitality and tourism industry will cost millions and drive business elsewhere in the UK, it has been warned.

The First Minister announced today that elements of the sector could open on July 15, despite the same businesses being given the green light on July 4 in other parts of the country.

It means companies which are already struggling to stay afloat will have another fortnight of lockdown at the busiest time of the year.

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw questioned why, if the SNP thought it was cutting the spread of the virus more quickly, the timetable for reopening wasn't accelerating.

But Ms Sturgeon instead claimed critics of her strategy were indulging in "grubby political opportunism".

Scottish Conservative leader Jackson Carlaw said:

"The only certainty Nicola Sturgeon delivered today was that our vital tourism and hospitality sector is being hit with a two-week lag.

"That will cost millions at a time when thousands of jobs are already on the line.

"All over the UK people who would have holidayed in Scotland in that crucial fortnight will instead be taking their business elsewhere on these islands.

"On the one hand, Nicola Sturgeon says she's been successful in cutting the spread of the virus more quickly than they expected.

"On the other, she is sticking to a timetable to keep Scotland's tourist trade closed for business.

"Every day counts for the Scottish hospitality trade at this time of year – and the SNP's inflexible approach isn't helping them.

"This go-slow approach from the First Minister shows she doesn't understand the economy and the dire consequences of these delays.

"Perhaps if the SNP had got its head around testing sooner, lockdown could have been lifted more quickly.

“Instead, Scotland has to look on while the rest of the UK and Europe resumes normal life.”