

Community Resilience Group Weekly Briefing - 49

7 January 2022

Covid Update

Over the last 7 days there have been 4047 new positive cases in Highland (to 06 January). This means the latest 7-day rate per 100,000 is 1719 per 100,000 as of 4 January. This is a very significant increase from when we last reported a 7-day rate of 364 per 100,000 as of 22 December and reflects the transmission rates of the Omicron variant. Extra caution is advised, as is sticking to the Scottish Government guidelines.

In terms of neighbourhood data, the map below and accompanying table, highlights the positive cases per 100,000 in communities across the Highland area. The test positivity rate on was 25.5% on 4 January up from 7.5% on 20 December.

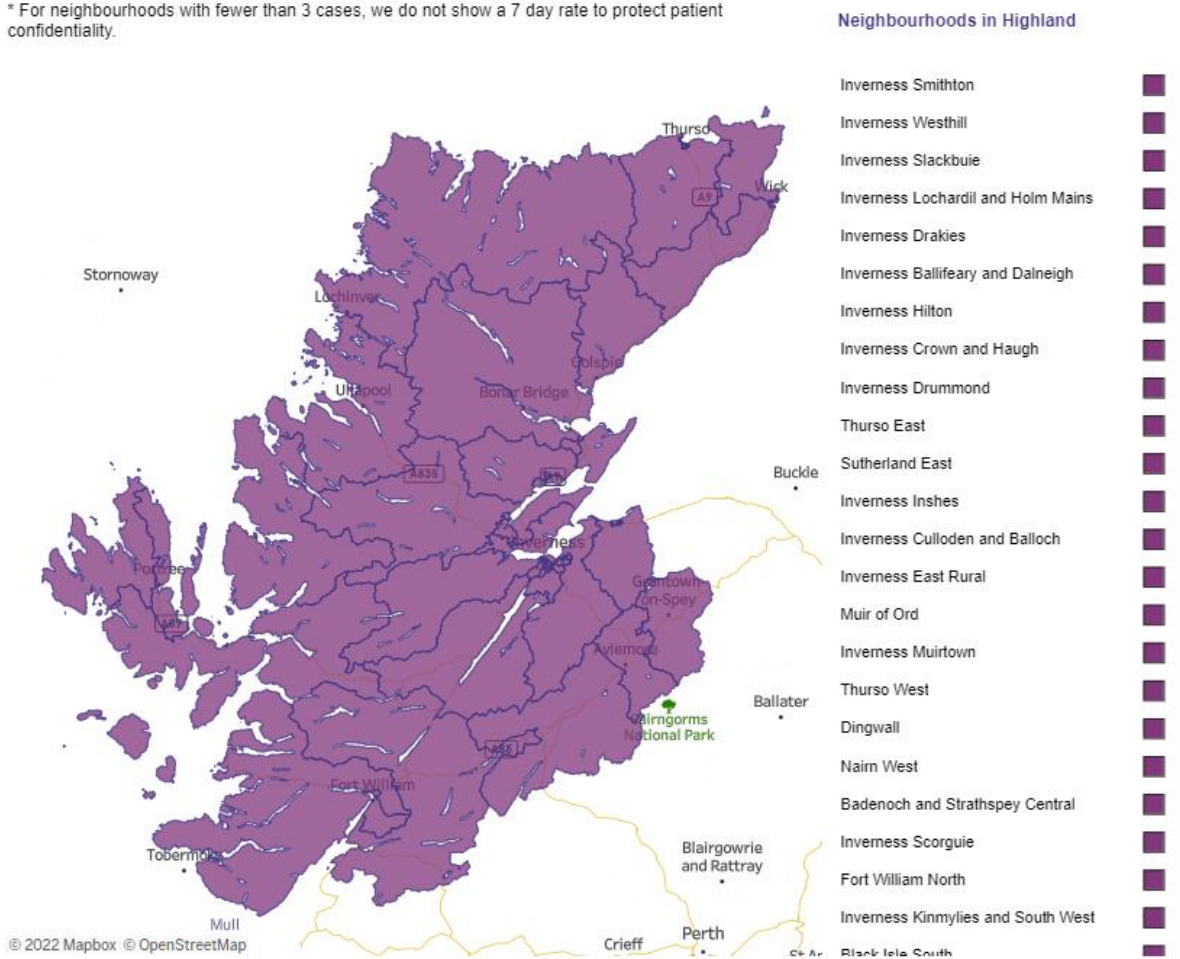
7 day positive cases in Highland based on people tested between 29 December 2021 and 4 January 2022

7 day positive cases	7 day positive rate per 100,000 population	7 day test positivity rate
4,047	1,719.0	25.2%

7 day positive rate per 100,000 population



* For neighbourhoods with fewer than 3 cases, we do not show a 7 day rate to protect patient confidentiality.



Scottish Government Guidance on Coronavirus (COVID-19): staying safe and protecting others

The Scottish Government revised its rules and guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 on 6 January 2022 to reflect response to the highly transmissible Omicron strain. You can find the most recent version here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/>

Scottish Government messages this week

The First Minister gave a Coronavirus (COVID-19) statement to the Scottish Parliament on 5 January 2022

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-5-january-2022/>

Key Points include:

- The First Minister confirmed that there are no proposals for additional measures at this stage, however existing protections and guidance will remain in place for the coming week pending further review.
- In Scotland over the past week, the total number of new reported cases has increased by 87%. COVID is significantly more widespread now than at any stage in the pandemic so far, and will almost certainly become even more so in the days to come.
- The restrictions on large gatherings, the requirement for distancing between groups of people in public indoor places and for table service in hospitality venues serving alcohol on the premises will remain in force for now and expected until 17 January.
- In addition, while not a legal requirement, Scottish Government are continuing to strongly advise the general public to limit contact with people in other households as far as possible, and to limit the number of households in any indoor gathering that does take place to a maximum of three.
- The Scottish Government is currently working on and will publish over the next few weeks a revised strategic framework, which will set out more fully how that process of adaptation can be managed with a view to building greater resilience.
- The First Minister confirmed two changes to the requirements on self-isolation and one change to requirement for PCR testing.
 - The initial advice when someone tests positive will still be to self-isolate for 10 days, however, there will now be an option to end isolation after 7 days as long as you, firstly, have no fever and, secondly, you record two negative lateral flow tests, one no earlier than day six after testing positive and another at least 24 hours after that.

- For close contacts (who are who are either under the age of 18 years, four months, or who are older than that and fully vaccinated) the requirement to self-isolate will end and be replaced by a requirement to take a lateral flow test every day for 7 days. If one of these tests is positive, self-isolation will then be required.
- From 6 January - if your lateral flow test is positive, and you do not have symptoms, you will no longer be required to take a PCR test to confirm the result. Instead, you must immediately isolate and also report your result online so that Test & Protect can commence the contact tracing process and give you advice as quickly as possible. You will also receive an online form that you must fill in, as would happen with a PCR positive in to ensure your contacts are notified.
- For businesses the FM confirmed the allocation of a further £55 million in business support.
 - Up to £28 million will be allocated to taxi and private hire drivers and operators.
 - £19 million will support services such as beauticians and hairdressers.
 - £5 million will be provided for sport,
 - and an additional £3 million for tourism.
 - In light of the widespread community transmission of Omicron in the UK just now, discussions are taking place today between the four UK governments about possible changes to travel rules, including the requirement for pre-departure testing. If these discussions result in proposed changes, parliament will be informed as quickly as possible.
- In education - all secondary school children are being asked to take a lateral flow test on the night before or morning of their first day back, and thereafter to test twice a week and also in advance of mixing socially with people from other households.
 - Likewise, university and college students should take a test immediately before travelling from home to term-time accommodation, and thereafter test twice a week and before socialising with people from other households.
 - And staff in all educational and early years settings should take a lateral flow test just before starting back at work, and in line with broader advice after that.
- The First Minister concluded with all other precautions to remain safe:
 - Work from home whenever possible.
 - Wear a face covering on public transport, in shops, and when moving about in hospitality. Make sure it fully covers your mouth and nose.
 - If you are meeting indoors, limit the number of households in your group to three at most. And keep windows open.
 - And follow all advice on hygiene.

Easing of restrictions on international travellers: Removal of pre-departure test requirement.

On 6 January, the Scottish Government confirmed that from Friday 7 January people travelling to Scotland from abroad who are fully vaccinated or under the age of 18 will no longer need to take pre-departure Covid tests and will also no longer be required to self-isolate on arrival until they've received a negative result. Further details here:

<https://www.gov.scot/news/easing-of-restrictions-on-international-travellers/>

Covid-19 Testing

The chart below provides a helpful overview of the types of tests available.

NHS Highland

The 2 types of coronavirus test currently being used regularly are:

Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) for people with symptoms
Lateral Flow Device (LFD) also known as a rapid test and is for routine testing for people that do not have symptoms.

COVID-19 TESTING

WITH SYMPTOMS	WITHOUT SYMPTOMS
PCR test	Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test
When to take a test <ul style="list-style-type: none">If you have COVID-19 symptomsTo confirm a positive lateral flow test result	When to take a test <ul style="list-style-type: none">If you do not have COVID-19 symptomsAs part of routine testing
How long does it take? <ul style="list-style-type: none">PCRs are processed in a labResults usually received within 48 hours	How long does it take? <ul style="list-style-type: none">Produce results within 30 minutesWith regular use, LFDs help to detect infection early
How to get a test? <p>Book Online https://bit.ly/Book_PCR_Test or call 119 It can take up to 72 hours to get the PCR Test result because they are processed in a laboratory.</p>	How to get a test? <p>Order online https://bit.ly/Free_Lateral_Flow_Tests_Scotland or call 119 or collect rapid LFD tests from your nearest participating pharmacy, if you do not have symptoms. Visit https://bit.ly/LFDTest_Pharmacy</p>

LFD Rapid Test you can do yourself.

Symptomatic Testing (with symptoms)

If you do believe you have symptoms, please self-isolate and book a PCR test. Postal PCR kits are available through NHS Inform either by calling 0800 028 2816 or online <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-do-a-pcr-test-at-home>.

In addition to the local support that is available, people can get support to self-isolate by calling the Council's helpline number: 0300 303 1362. This can include access to food and supplies to self-isolate and individuals may be entitled to a £500 self-isolation support grant.

Asymptomatic Testing (without symptoms)

It continues to be important that people test themselves even if they don't have symptoms. Taking a rapid LFD test twice a week can help stop new variants earlier, limiting the spread of the virus.

Test kits are available at pharmacies, or to order online from www.nhsinform.scot/testing, or by calling 119. Test kits are also available at Community testing sites.

Community Testing 10 – 14 January for those without symptoms (Asymptomatic)

The community testing programme offers rapid COVID-19 tests for people without symptoms.

Next week a mobile testing unit will be in Inverness.

The mobile testing unit 'Moves Like Jagger' will be in Tesco's Car Park, Inverness Retail Park, Eastfield Avenue, Inverness IV2 7GD. Opening times will be;

- Monday 10 January 10am-4pm
- Tuesday 11 January 9am-4pm
- Wednesday 12 January 9am-4pm
- Thursday 13 January 9am-4pm
- Friday 14 January 9am-3pm

Just to emphasise that there are no specific outbreaks in this community, this is to support normalising testing across the area.

No appointment is necessary, and it will be open both for asymptomatic testing and to collect LFD test kits.

Please note that these drop-in sessions for community testing are only for people without symptoms. Anyone that becomes unwell should isolate immediately and seek a PCR test. PCR tests can be booked through NHS Inform online or by calling 0800 028 2816.

Covid-19 Vaccination Update

The latest update from NHS on the vaccine can be accessed at the following link: www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine.

For details of vaccination clinics in Highland, including drop-in clinics and GP practices supporting the booster roll-out, please check the link below. There are also FAQs on how vaccinations are being delivered in the NHS Highland area. <https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/COVID19/Pages/Vaccination.aspx>

Vaccination Scams

Scammers are using mobile phone numbers to offer Covid-19 tests using a 'vaccinationpass' website which then demands payment.

If you receive a message, call, or link like this, do not respond. Instead, notify www.scamwatch.scot or call 0808 164 6000.

For information on vaccination scams and other Covid-19 related scams, visit the Trading Standards Scotland website <https://www.tsscot.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-scams/>.

Food Support for Groups

We know that a number of you continue to provide support to the most vulnerable in your communities and that most of you already have well defined routes for accessing food to provide this support or are supporting individuals to access their shopping or community fridges/food tables.

If you are struggling to access food to continue support to vulnerable people locally, please do contact us through the policy mailbox and we can look at ways that we can support your group going forward.

Contact: policy6@highland.gov.uk

Helpful Links

Welfare Support Team -

www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/102970/benefit_advice

Self Isolation Support Grant - www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/940/self-isolation_support_grant

Energy Advice

energyadvisors@hi.homeenergyscotland.org

AbilityNet - IT advice or support AbilityNet

Helpline 0800 048 7642.

Covid Resilience Grant Support -

www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1422811/supporting_community_resilience/category/155/grants_for_community_groups

HTSI Community Group Helpline

Telephone Number 01349 808022