

MEDIA RELEASE

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Caution urged as cases increase

Members of the public across Highland, Argyll and Bute are being urged to remain cautious and continue to be vigilant for symptoms of COVID-19 as new confirmed cases for this week are close to hitting 600; 193 of these confirmed on Thursday.

The cases are widespread across all of the NHS Highland area. Fort William, Oban and the Isle of Bute are seeing particularly high rates. There is no single situation driving the numbers up, sustained community transmission explains the increase in cases.

As well as being vigilant for symptoms, members of the public are also being asked to remain cautious and minimise contacts during this period of high levels.

Dr Tim Allison, Director of Public Health for NHS Highland, said: “We have seen quite a significant increase in the last few days in NHS Highland which is concerning. Whilst the number of people being admitted to hospital is lower than previous waves, the impact of COVID-19 on those affected their families, local schools and businesses remains significant.

“Everyone has played their part so well in keeping the numbers down which is why we are able to enjoy the new freedoms that we have. There are still lots of things we can all do to help limit the spread even though many of the previous restrictions have eased.

“Wearing face masks when inside or in crowded areas, regular hand washing, regular testing using LFD tests when you have no symptoms and, when invited, please come forward to get vaccinated. All of these will help us in keeping the COVID numbers down.”

Dr Allison also asked that communities remain vigilant for symptoms. The typical symptoms are a new continuous cough, a high temperature or fever and a loss of, or change in, normal taste or smell. However, people with COVID-19 can present with a wide range of symptoms including headache, sore muscles and joints, tiredness, sore throat, cold-like symptoms and diarrhoea and vomiting. Anyone that becomes unwell should isolate immediately and seek a PCR test.

With the increase in cases on the Isle of Bute the area will now have a Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) available to provide additional PCR testing capacity. The MTU will be on site on the 23 and 25 August at Rothesay Leisure Centre, 96 High Street, Rothesay, PA20 9BN between the hours of 11:00 and 15:30.

Testing is available through appointment only but everyone, whether you have symptoms or not, can be tested here given the community outbreak. To book an appointment, you can contact NHS Inform online or by calling 0800 028 2816. When booking you should select the option 'I have been asked to book a test by my local council or health protection team' which will allow you to book a test even if you don't have symptoms.

Dr Allison added: "This is a significant situation and we are expecting the case numbers to rise further with the recent relaxation of measures. Communities should remain vigilant. We do have a higher number of people in the area at the moment which is to be expected but I would really urge caution for everyone."

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