

Community Resilience Group Weekly Briefing - 31 20 August 2021

Covid Update

Over the last 7 days there have been 412 new positive cases in Highland (to 19 August), an increase from last week when 360 were reported. This means the latest 7-day rate per 100,000 has increased from 152.9 per 100,000 last week to 175 per 100,000 as of 19 August. It remains important to be careful and stick 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 6.5% on 17 August, up from 5.8% on 10 August.

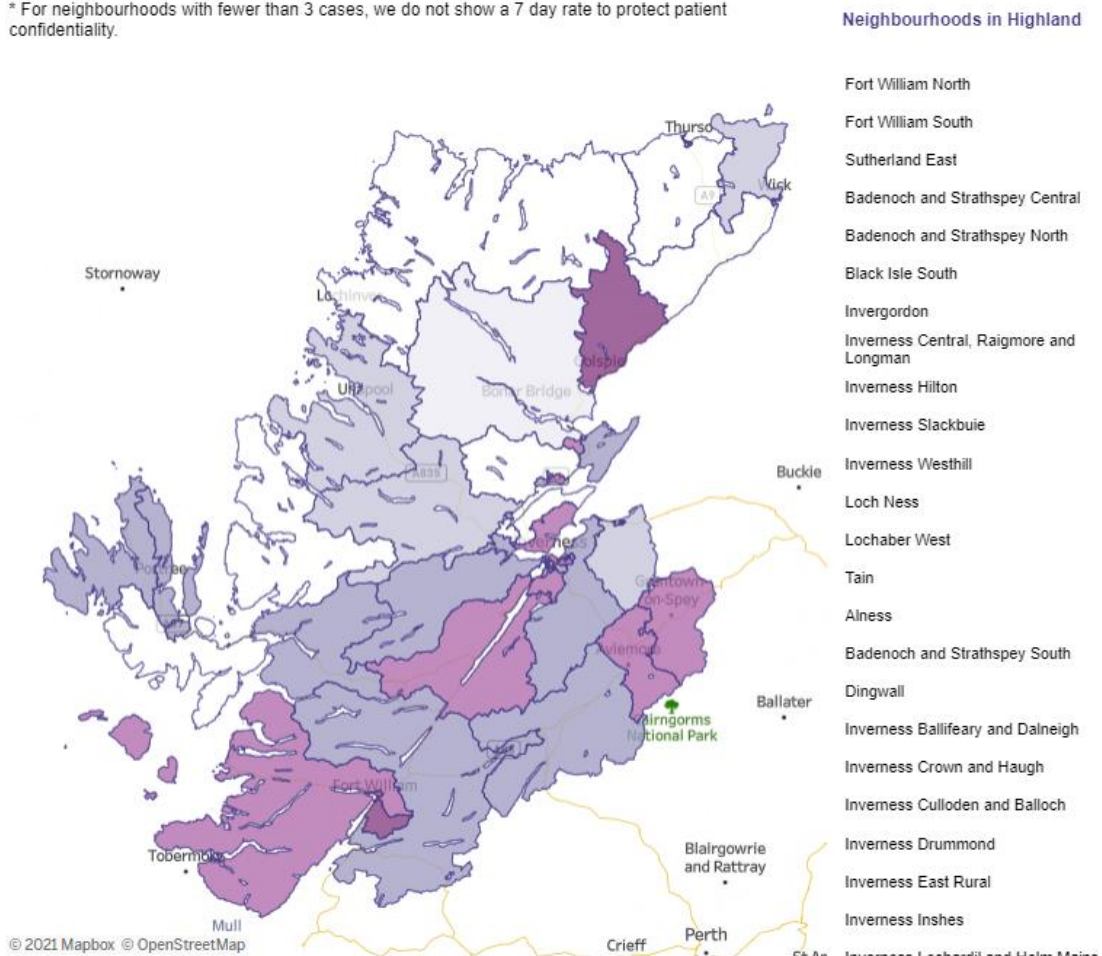
7 day positive cases in Highland based on people tested between 11 August 2021 and 17 August 2021

7 day positive cases	7 day positive rate per 100,000 population	7 day test positivity rate
412	175.0	6.5%

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.



Scotland has Moved Beyond Level Zero

From 9 August 2021 the whole of Scotland moved to beyond Level 0. You can find Scottish Government guidance for everyone on how to stay safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19 here.

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

People at highest risk (those formerly classed as 'shielding) from Covid are advised to follow the same advice as the rest of the population. You can find advice for people at highest risk here <https://www.mygov.scot/covid-highest-risk>

Asymptomatic Testing

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. The details for where these are next week is outlined below.

Symptomatic Testing

If you do believe you have symptoms, please self-isolate and book a PCR test.

Postal PCR kits are available through NHS Inform either online [here](#) or by calling 0800 028 2816.

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.

Community Testing 23 – 27 August for those without symptoms

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

Next week a mobile testing unit will be in Golspie

The mobile testing unit "Testalot" will be in the main car park at Fountain Road, Golspie, KW10 6TH:

Wednesday 25 August, 11am – 4pm

Thursday 26 August, 9am – 4pm

Friday 27 August, 9am – 3pm

Just to emphasise that there is no specific outbreak 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.

I would appreciate it if you could encourage people across your networks to attend.

Vaccination Update

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

Vaccination of 16-18 year olds

From 7 August, 16-18 year olds are now eligible for vaccination and will be directed to the drop in clinics - see NHS Highland website for details
<https://www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk/COVID19/Pages/Vaccination.aspx>.

Universal Credit: Claimants being informed of the end of the uplift

The UK Government introduced a £20 a week increase in Universal Credit payments in April 2020, to support struggling households through the coronavirus pandemic. The measure was intended to last for 12 months, due to end on March 31, 2021 but were extended for six months to the end of September.

Communications with claimants have been undertaken over the Summer to make it clear that the uplift will no longer be included in their standard allowance after the end of September, however we understand that claimants are now being notified via their online accounts of the date of the last payment of their universal credit 'uplift'.

The entry in the claimant's online journal will trigger an alert via email or text, depending on their preferred method of communication. DWP are not writing letters to claimants.

The notification then invites the claimant to 'get help with managing your money' via the DWP's [Help with debt and managing money](#) resource.

Post Office card account (POca) service is coming to an end

The Post Office card account (POca) has been a mechanism for DWP to pay state pensions and benefits to people, but its contract with the Post Office ends in November 2021. Customers who receive their benefits and/or pensions into a POca are encouraged to take action as the end of the POca contract approaches.

Customers can phone the DWP Customer Service centre on 0800 085 7133 (8.30am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday) to provide new account details for their benefit or State Pension payments.

All POca customers who are unable to provide a bank, building society or credit union account will be moved to the DWP voucher-based scheme called the Payment Exception service which provides access to payments via the PayPoint network. Payment Exception service payments can also be accessed via the Post Office network from the end of August 2021.

Customers will start to be moved to the Payment Exception service from the end of August 2021 if they haven't yet contacted DWP with new account details.

<https://www.postoffice.co.uk/post-office-card-account/important-changes>

Consultation on a national health and social care service

A national consultation was launched on 17 August setting out the Scottish Government's proposals on the way social care is delivered in Scotland.

Social care includes support for people with physical disability, learning disabilities or mental health conditions, older people and those with dementia, people with or recovering from alcohol or drug addictions, those who are, have been or are at risk of being homeless, and children and families who may need additional support, or where children are unable to live with their own families.

This consultation seeks views on creating a comprehensive community health and social care service that supports people of all ages.

Views are sought from as many people as possible – including people who access care and support, carers, members of the workforce and those who may access care and support in the future - which includes everyone.

A series of online engagement events are being held in August, September and October

Find details below for online events and registration and a link to the consultation at <https://consult.gov.scot/health-and-social-care/a-national-care-service-for-scotland/>

Help inform the future of the NHS Highland website

NHS Highland are seeking views from people to help understand what they need online in order to help scope, design and deliver an effective future NHS Highland website.

To help us to ensure that the brief for the website redesign reflects the needs of its users, an Edinburgh based design research consultancy, Graft, would like to engage with current and potential users to understand what a new NHS Highland website should consider. The engagement can take different forms:

- You can complete a short online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/nhshighlandwebsite>
- We can facilitate an online focus group

If you are interested in taking part, please contact: melody@graft.global or iain@graft.global

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