

Community Resilience Group Weekly Briefing - 44

26 November 2021

Covid Update

Over the last 7 days there have been 1060 new positive cases in Highland (to 25 November). This means the latest 7-day rate per 100,000 shows a decrease from 443 per 100,000 as of 15 November to 330.4 per 100,000 as of 25 November. This is a welcome decrease in the number of cases in Highland following a period of high number of cases, however it is 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 7.4% on 23 November a decrease from 8.9% on 15 November.

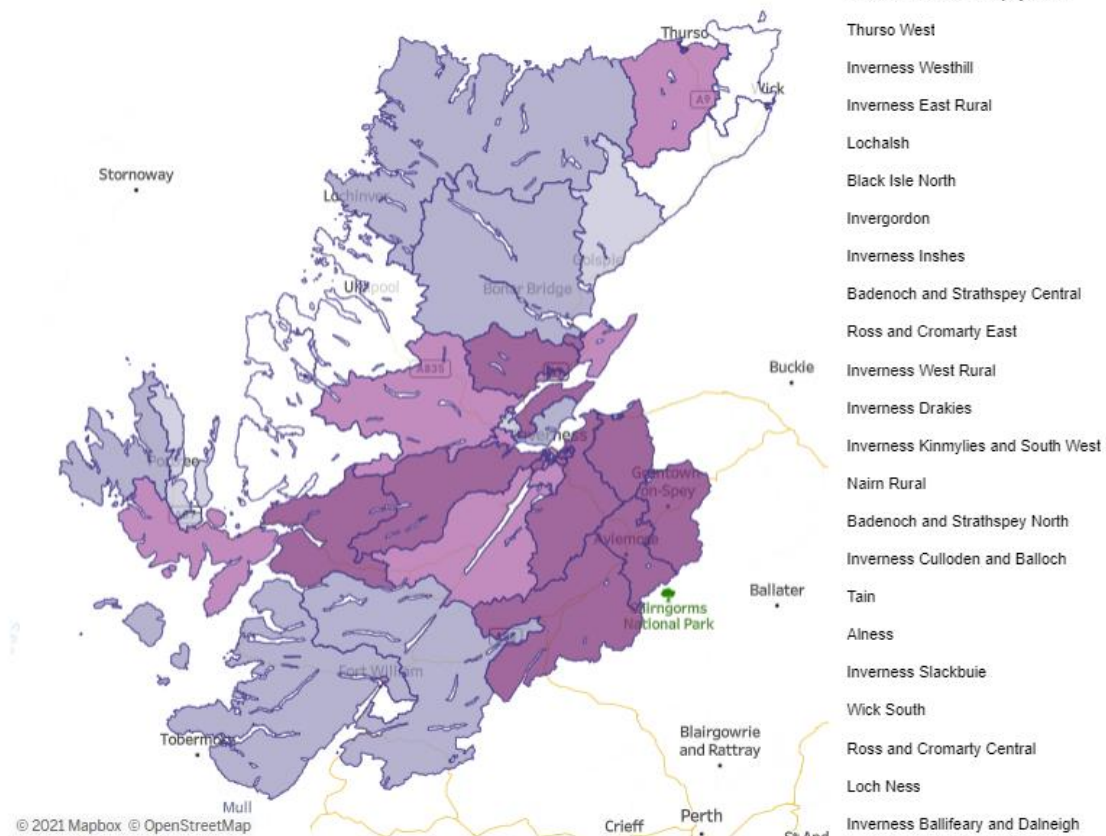
7 day positive cases in Highland based on people tested between 17 November 2021 and 23 November 2021

7 day positive cases	7 day positive rate per 100,000 population	7 day test positivity rate
763	324.1	7.4%

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/>

Scottish Government messages this week

The First Minister gave a statement to Parliament on COVID-19 on Tuesday, 23 November 2021 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/deputy-first-minister-statement-covid-19/>.

Key messages included:

Restrictions being tightened or reintroduced in a number of European countries are a reminder that the threat of the pandemic unfortunately is not yet behind us.

Thankfully, Scotland is not, at this stage, seeing the rapid rise in cases that others are experiencing, however we must continue to take care and we must not allow ourselves to be lulled into any false sense of security.

In the past seven days, the average number of new cases being recorded each day has fallen from just over 3,000 to just under 3,000 – it's been a fall of around 3%.

However, there continues to be quite a marked variation between different age groups. In the over 60s, cases fell by 19%, likely reflecting the progress of the booster programme.

In the under 60s there was only a very slight decline and in younger age groups, cases have been broadly static over the past week.

In the past week, the number of people in hospital with COVID has fallen only slightly - from 779 to 743. And the number of people in intensive care has risen very slightly – from 57 to 60.

A number of different factors will be at play over the next few weeks.

On the one hand, the booster programme will continue to gather pace; and more people in younger age groups will receive their primary vaccinations.

On the other hand, we can also expect more indoor mixing to take place - as the weather gets colder, and of course as we head towards the festive season.

All of this is putting significant and sustained pressure on the NHS.

That is why the Cabinet decided to retain for a further period all of the remaining legal protections, such as the requirement to wear face coverings, to keep in place the COVID certification scheme, and also to intensify our public information campaign in the weeks ahead. From 6 December it will be possible to access larger

venues or events covered by the COVID certification scheme by showing either proof of vaccination, as now, or a recent negative lateral flow test result

Getting vaccinated remains the single most important thing any of us can do to protect ourselves and others. Everyone, including pregnant women, should get vaccinated - whether for a first, second, third or booster jag - as soon as they are able. And get your flu jag too if you are eligible for that.

As well as taking up vaccination, everyone should to take regular lateral flow tests, and make extra effort over the festive period to take an lateral flow test before any occasion when socialising with others. And if it is positive, do not go. Instead get a PCR test and self-isolate while you wait for the result.

Wearing face coverings on public transport, in shops and when moving around in hospitality settings remains a legal requirement and is also a vital protection - a study published just last week suggested that face coverings may reduce the risk of transmission by over 50%.

Good ventilation also reduces risks in indoor spaces. So please open windows if you have people round.

And lastly, please do continue to work from home whenever possible.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-23-november-2021/>

Covid-19 Testing

The chart below provides a helpful overview of the types of tests available (attached as pdf)

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

PCR test

When to take a test

- If you have COVID-19 symptoms
- To confirm a positive lateral flow test result

How long does it take?

- PCRs are processed in a lab
- Results usually received within 48 hours

How to get a test?

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.

WITHOUT SYMPTOMS

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test

When to take a test

- If you do not have COVID-19 symptoms
- As part of routine testing

How long does it take?

- Produce results within 30 minutes
- With regular use, LFDs help to detect infection early

How to get a test?

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

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 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.

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

Community Testing 29 November – 3 December 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 Fort William.

The mobile testing unit 'Testalot' will be in the Middle Street Car Park, Fort William. PH33 6EU Opening times will be;

- Monday 29 November 12 noon-4pm
- Tuesday 30 November 9am-4pm
- Wednesday 1 December 9am-4pm
- Thursday 2 December 9am-4pm
- Friday 3 December 12 noon-4pm

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.

Those who attend a COVID-19 Mobile Clinic will also have the opportunity to enter a free monthly draw to win an Amazon Kindle e-reader (10th generation, with 6" backlit

display) after completing an exit survey. The winner will be drawn by random at the end of the month.

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

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 access for flu and Covid-19 and information about drop-in clinics that are operating in Highland please check the following link:

<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.

Suicide Intervention and Prevention Programme

Please find attached a flyer with upcoming dates for Suicide Intervention and Prevention Programme Training through December to February.

The SIPP programme aims to improve awareness of suicidal thinking; to increase confidence to ask someone if they are feeling suicidal; and to support them to seek further help. The training is currently delivered online by approved suicide prevention trainers and is split over 2 x 2hr sessions - attendance at both sessions is required.

Dates are open to any staff from the Highland Community Planning Partnership in the North Highland area including: staff who want to be able to help someone who might be at risk of suicide; all staff NHS (including clinical staff), Council, frontline services, Third Sector who have patient/client/service user/public contact who have had no previous suicide awareness training or last training was more than three years ago. Any queries to nhsh.mentalhealthtraining@nhs.scot

Prevalence of fuel poverty within Highland

For an update on fuel poverty concerns in Highland and information on some of the sources of advice and support available, read the Highland Council press article illustrating the deeply concerning level of fuel poverty and tough financial decisions being faced by residents throughout Highland, particularly those in rural areas
https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/14169/members_react_to_the_concerning_prevalence_of_fuel_poverty_within_highland.

Weather Warning

Much of Scotland will experience very windy conditions over the next 24 hours or so, and a generally cold few days, with the return of wintry hazards of snow and ice in

places. Storm Arwen was named yesterday, with an Amber Warning for Wind issued parts of northern and eastern Scotland.

Storm Arwen is due to reach the Highlands today and the Council is urging communities to stay safe and ensure they follow the very latest weather forecasts from the Met Office and keep up to date with Traffic Scotland's website or social media feeds.

Gale force winds of up to 80mph are expected to affect the Highlands today and over the weekend and snow is also forecast. A Yellow Warning for Snow has also been issued for the high ground of the Grampians, Perthshire and the Highlands for today (Friday 26 November 2021)

The Council press release in the link below includes links to useful Twitter Feeds including the Met Office and advice on being ready for winter.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/news/article/14177/council_urging_residents_to_stay_safe_with_storm_arwen_due_to_affect_highland

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

