

Community Resilience Group Weekly Briefing - 54 11 February 2022

Covid Update

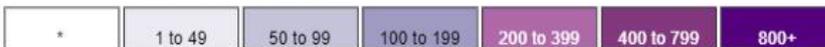
Over the last 7 days there have been 1635 new positive PCR cases in Highland up to 10 February compared to 835 positive PCR cases up 03 February. The seven-day rate for this period is 694.5 per 100,00 population, compared to 354.7 per 100,000 population a week ago. From January, the Scottish Government made changes to their published data in line with their recent guidance that those without symptoms testing positive with a lateral flow device no longer need to get a confirmatory PCR test, meaning that current daily numbers capture fewer positive cases than before.

In terms of neighbourhood data, the map below and accompanying table, highlights the positive cases per 100,000 in communities across the Highland area.

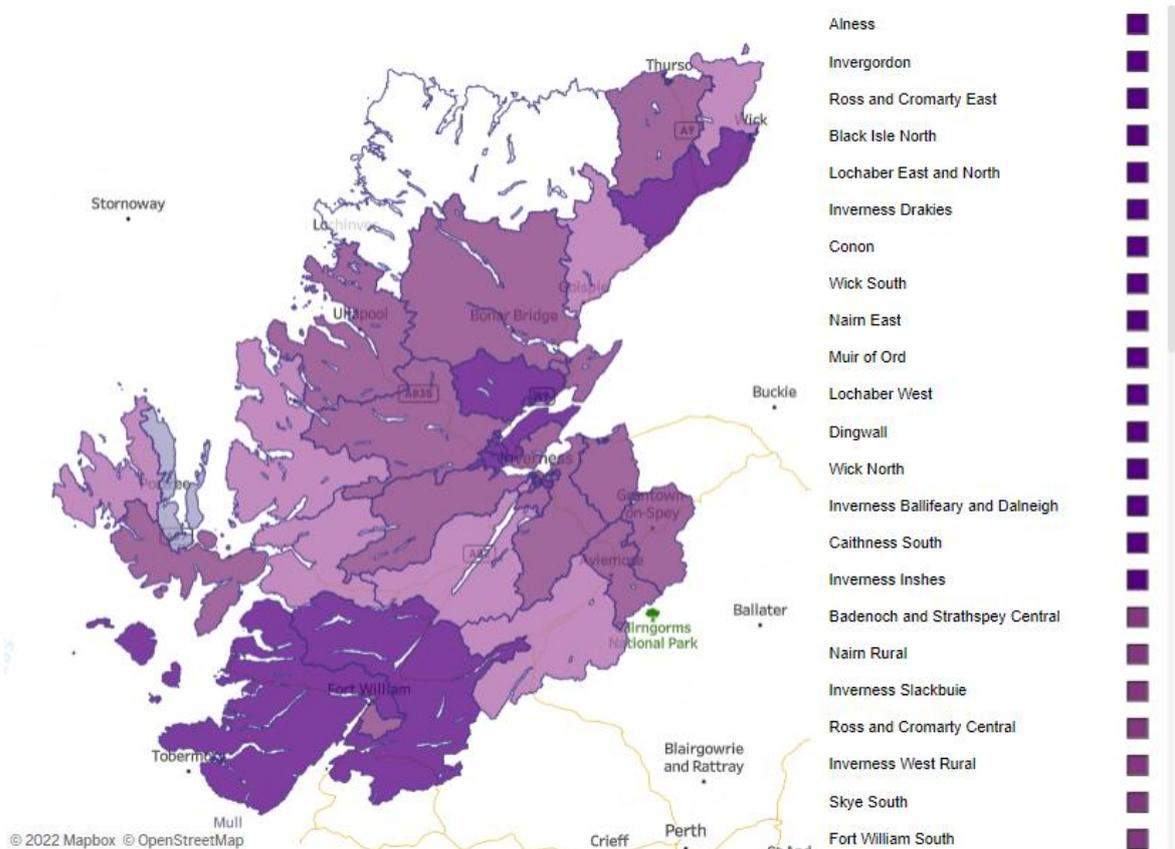
7 day positive cases in Highland based on people tested between 2 February 2022 and 8 February 2022

7 day positive cases	7 day positive rate per 100,000 population
1,635	694.5

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 **Neighbourhoods in Highland**



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 31 January 2022. 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 8 February 2022

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-statement-8-february-2022/>

Key Points include:

The First Minister set out the Scottish Government's latest assessment of the COVID data and its impacts.

- Case numbers have remained broadly stable. There are significant differences between age groups. There was a fall of more than a quarter amongst the under 15s. Cases also fell - by 6% - in the 25 to 44 age group, and by more than 10% in those aged 75 and over. The biggest increase - of more than 50% - was amongst 15 to 24 year olds.
- The number in hospital with COVID at any given time has also fallen and there is a decline in the number of deaths of people with COVID.
- This will be the last weekend that figures for the weekend will be published. They will be reported on Monday. We can move back to weekend reporting should we need to
- While much more stable than it was, the virus is still widespread. 1 in 30 remains a high level of infection
- Updated guidance on home working has supported a partial return to the office in recent days, with hybrid working where appropriate
- some baseline protective measures – such as COVID certification and the requirement to wear face coverings in certain settings - will remain in force for now and it is recommended that we all take lateral flow tests before mixing with people from other households.
- This will provide some reassurance to people at highest risk. People in higher risk category already carry a lot of responsibility. It would not be fair to ask them to go back into isolation.
- Employers have a particular responsibility to consider the needs of people on the High Risk List in their plans for hybrid working.
- There has been a good take up of the Distance Aware Scheme. These badges remain available in libraries and in Asda.

- The advisory sub-group on Education is meeting to decide if face masks will still be required in schools. (see update below_
- There is no evidence that the sub-type (BA2) of Omicron is any more dangerous than Omicron, although some data abroad suggests it is more transmissible.
- We continue to offer and encourage vaccination for any 5-11 year old who has an underlying health condition that puts them at higher risk should they get COVID, and also for any 5-11 year old who is a household contact of someone who is immune suppressed.
- It is intended to publish an updated Strategic Framework which will set out in detail our approach to managing COVID more sustainably on 22 February.
- The First Minister said: "The situation now remains much more positive than it was at the turn of the year. It seems reasonable, therefore, based on the data, to conclude that we are now through the worst of this wave of Omicron."
- She added: "That has enabled the removal of virtually all the additional measures that we introduced in December and a return to normality in much of everyday life. To stay on this track, though, continued care and caution remains necessary and prudent:
 - Please get fully vaccinated as soon as you can.
 - Continue to take care when socialising. In particular, take a lateral flow test before meeting other people socially.
 - Take the other precautions that we know make a difference.
 - Talk to your employer about a return to hybrid working, and follow the guidance and precautions they adopt to make the workplace safe.
 - Wear a face covering on public transport, in shops, and when moving about in hospitality.
 - Keep windows open if meeting indoors.
 - And follow all advice on hygiene'.

10 February Update COVID-19 school rules to be eased from 28 February

<https://www.gov.scot/news/covid-19-school-rules-to-be-eased/>

High school pupils and staff will not be required to wear face coverings in classrooms from 28 February.

Teachers and pupils who wish to continue to wear a face covering in the classroom should be fully supported in doing so.

Face coverings will still be required in communal areas, subject to future review.

Specific mitigations relating to assemblies and transition visits for learners who will start primary or secondary in August 2022, will also be eased as of 28 February.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#) will be updated next week.

Covid-19 Testing

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 14 – 18 February for those without symptoms (Asymptomatic):

The community testing programme offers rapid COVID-19 tests for people without symptoms. Next week, there are no plans to deploy our mobile testing units to carry out assisted testing. Instead, we continue with our programme of Outreach Delivery, sending small teams to various locations throughout the Highland area to provide testing advice and to hand out test kits.

LFD Kits free to collect - Dates, times, and locations are as follows;

Monday 14 February

- Inverness Telford Retail Park (B&M) 8:30am-12:30pm, 1pm-4pm

Tuesday 15 February

- Ullapool Tesco Car Park 9:30am-12:30pm, 1pm-3:30pm
- Conon Bridge High Street Car Park 9am-12noon
- Dingwall High Street (Museum) 1pm-4pm
- Inverness Retail Park 8:30am-12:30pm, 1pm-4pm

Wednesday 16 February

- Ardersier Memorial Hall Car Park 9am-12noon
- Nairn High Street 1pm-4pm
- Beaully The Square 9am-12noon
- Muir of Ord Library Car Park 1pm-4pm
- Alness High Street (Bank Lane) 9am-12noon
- Invergordon Library 1pm-4pm

Thursday 17 February

- Inverness Victorian Market 9am-12noon
- Inverness Inshes Retail Park 1pm-4pm
- Thurso High Street (Museum) 10:30am-12:30pm, 1pm-3pm

Friday 18 February

- Inverness High Street (Market Brae Steps) 9am-12:30pm, 1pm-4pm
- Dingwall High Street (Museum) 9am-12noon
- Conon Bridge High Street Car Park 1pm-4pm
- Muir of Ord Library Car Park 9am-12noon
- Beaully The Square 1pm-4pm

For those with 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 119 if you can't book a test online.

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/>.

Plan Today to Vote in May

The Scottish Local Government Elections for The Highland Council are taking place on Thursday 5 May 2022 to elect 74 Local Councillors in 21 wards. Local Councillors are responsible for making decisions on your behalf about local services.

While the election is not until May, planning is already underway to help you stay safe while casting your vote.

There are a number of ways to have your say in the election in May - you can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, which is known as a proxy vote.

The Electoral Registration Officer for Highland has sent a letter to all households in the Highland area in advance of the elections, to let them know who is registered to

vote and who has a postal vote. Look out for your letter in a brown envelope addressed to the Occupier(s) in the coming days. This letter is important and will give your household further information on how to register to vote, if you are not already registered or how to apply for a postal or proxy vote.

Bill Gillies, Electoral Registration Officer for Highland, said: "We're thinking about these elections now so that, however you choose to cast your vote in May, you can do so safely. Polling Stations will be open and following all public health advice. In the current circumstances, particularly the COVID pandemic, you may be thinking perhaps about voting by post?"

"If you're thinking about voting by post, you can apply now. This will make sure your application is processed early, and your postal vote can be sent to you more quickly. It's easy to apply and further information can be found on our website www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb

"You need to be registered to vote in order to have a say at the election if you are not already registered – the easiest way is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. And remember, it doesn't matter where you were born, if you are aged 16 and over and are resident in Scotland, you are now eligible to register and vote at Local Government elections."

Residents can visit the Scottish Local Government elections page on our website at www.saa.gov.uk/h-wi-vjb to find out more about these elections. The page will be updated with new information as it becomes available. Any residents who have questions can also contact the electoral registration team on 0800 393 783 or by e-mail ero@highland.gov.uk

[Together We Care - NHS Highland Strategy 2022-27 - a chance to have your voice heard](#)

NHS Highland are currently running a project to develop their 2022-27 strategy; starting with gathering people's views and priorities. There is more information at the links below, including a link to an online survey.

- You Tube - short film explaining the "what is it" and "why" [Together We Care - YouTube](#)
- Survey - Please fill in and cascade the survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/519bjRi4Sb>

Group submissions - If any organisation would like to submit a "group response" these can be sent to nhsh.listening@nhs.scot

Group Chat - If any group is having or would like an online meeting with an informal discussion about local health services / needs, please contact grace.barron@nhs.scot.

Introduction to Community Resilience

The Highland Council's Resilience Team have compiled a short video on an introduction to community resilience which is intended to inform Communities. The video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2zLd-FWv28&t=385s>

Scottish Recovery Network Survey

We believe that to make recovery real we all need to be equal partners in transforming the mental health system. We want Scotland to be a place where people with lived experience are meaningfully involved in the design and delivery of mental health support and strategies.

We are currently working on a project exploring what makes engagement meaningful for people with lived experience relating to mental health in Scotland. We are keen to hear from people across the mental health system, including people with lived experience and/or those working in statutory and 3rd Sector mental health services.

The survey should take less than ten minutes to complete and will be open until Friday 18th February 2022. To thank you for your time we will invite you to enter a prize draw to win a £50 [Love2Shop](#) voucher.

You can access the survey at the following link
<https://bit.ly/MeaningfulEngagementSurvey>

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