

Community Resilience Group Weekly Briefing - 56

28 February 2022

Covid Update

Over the 7 day period up to 24 February there were 2360 new positive cases in Highland compared to 1876 positive cases up to 17 February. The seven-day rate for this period is 1002.4 per 100,00 population, compared to 798.1 per 100,000 population the week before. Figures are the new number of reported positive cases (either a person's first LFD or PCR positive test) in the latest 24-hour period.

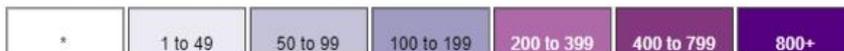
In terms of neighbourhood data, the map below and accompanying table, highlights the positive cases per 100,000 in communities across the Highland area.

7 day positive cases in Highland based on people tested between 15 February 2022 and 21 February 2022

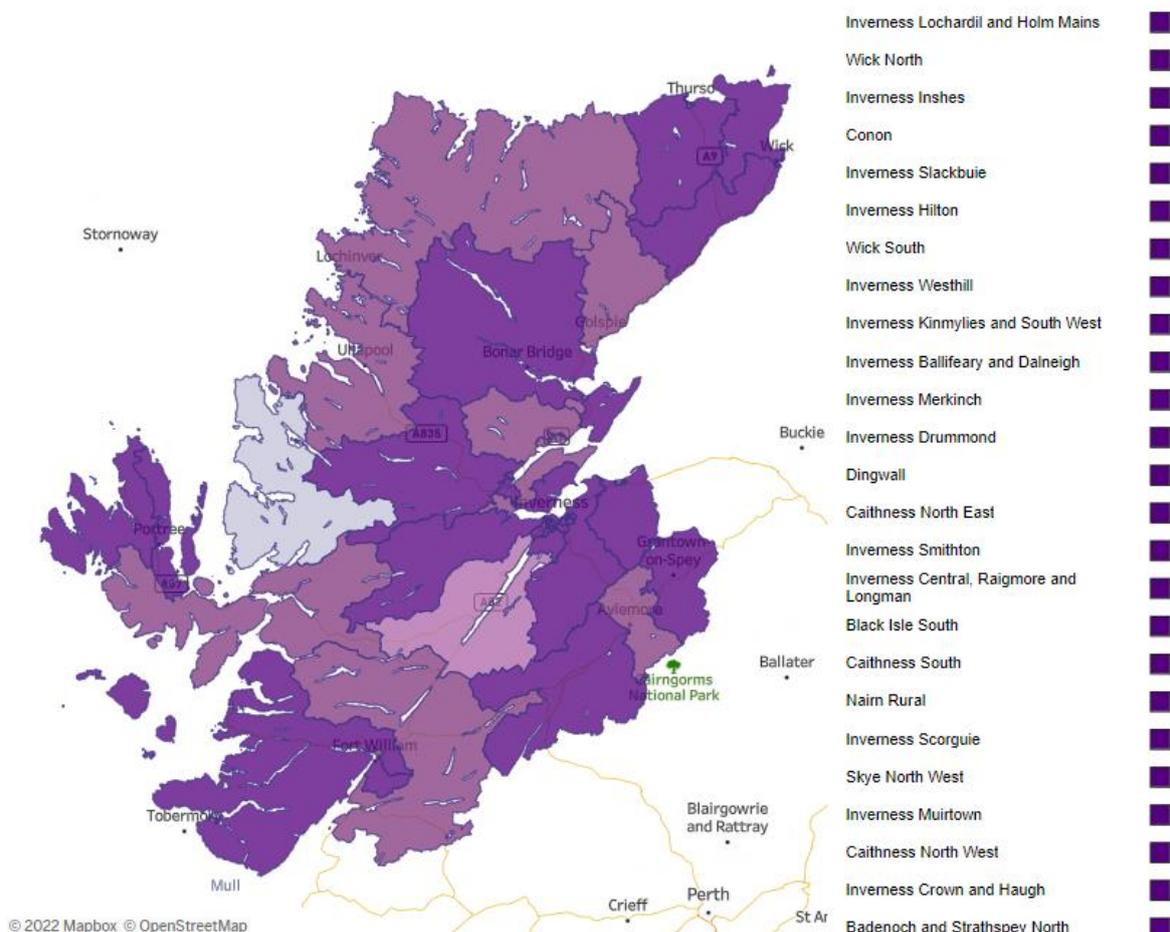
7 day positive cases	7 day positive rate per 100,000 population
2,241	951.9

The data for the most recent days are likely to be incomplete, therefore a 3 day lag has been applied to this data.

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 Coronavirus (COVID-19): Scotland's Strategic Framework update - February 2022

This update of the Strategic Framework assesses where we are in the pandemic and sets out Scotland's approach to managing COVID-19 and its associated harms effectively for the long term as we prepare for a calmer phase of the pandemic.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-scotlands-strategic-framework-update-february-2022/>

Scottish Government messages this week

The First Minister gave a Coronavirus (COVID-19) statement to the Scottish Parliament on 22 February 2022.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-tuesday-22-february-2022/>

Key Points include:

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

A new staged approach to easing protective measures will help Scotland manage and recover from the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In a statement to Parliament, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirmed the details of the updated Strategic Framework to manage COVID-19 primarily through public health advice, vaccination, and treatment rather than legal restrictions.

The First Minister also set out an indicative timescale for remaining legal protections to be lifted:

- vaccine certification will no longer be legally required from Monday 28 February, although the app will remain available so any business that wishes to continue certification on a voluntary basis to reassure customers will be able to do so
- current legal requirements on the use of face coverings, the collection of customer details for contact tracing purposes, and for businesses, service providers and places of worship to have regard to guidance on Covid and to take reasonably practicable measures set out in the guidance are expected to be lifted on 21 March, subject to the state of the pandemic
- access to lateral flow and PCR tests will continue to be free of charge, ahead of a detailed transition plan being published on the future of Scotland's test and protect programme in March

The UK-wide COVID infection survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics will continue.

- Over the last week, reported cases have fallen very slightly, by around 1%. They fell in all age groups under 45 and rose in all age groups over 45.
- Hospital admissions have slightly increased again, from 619 in the week to 11 February to 654 in the most recent week.

- Total hospital occupancy has also increased. We will obviously continue to keep a close watch on this.
- The number of people in intensive care with COVID – 25 – continues to be relatively low.

We continue to face a very highly transmissible variant that is causing a high level of community infection. However, while it is far from harmless, its overall impact is less severe than Delta.

Advice for the general public, meantime:

- If you have COVID symptoms, continue to go for a PCR test. Access to these tests will remain free of charge at testing sites across the country.
- Continue to make regular use of lateral flow tests even if you don't have symptoms. Advice is to test at least twice a week and in particular if you are going to a crowded place or mixing with someone who is clinically vulnerable.
- In Scotland, for now, those who test positive for COVID will continue to be asked to isolate for the recommended period. Self isolation support payments will continue to be available to those who are eligible.
- The recommended period of isolation will be kept under review.

The new framework marks the point at which we move away from legal restrictions, and rely instead on sensible behaviours, adaptations and mitigations. This must go hand in hand with a continuing determination to look after each other. All of us have a part to play in ensuring a safe and sustainable recovery.

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 28 February – 4 March for those without symptoms (Asymptomatic):

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

Next week, the mobile testing unit “Jabberonaut” will be in the Aviemore Retail Park, Grampian Road, Aviemore between Tuesday and Friday, where we will be offering assisted testing in support of our Outreach activities. Opening times will be as follows;

- Tuesday 1 March, 10am-4pm
- Wednesday 2 March, 9am-4pm
- Thursday 3 March, 9am-4pm
- Friday 4 March, 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.

In addition, 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 LFD test kits which are free to collect. Dates, times, and locations are as follows:

Monday 28 February

- Lairg, Lochside Car Park 10:30am-12noon
- Bonar Bridge, Bridge Car Park 1pm-3pm

Tuesday 1 March

- Inverness, Slackbuie ASDA Car Park 9:30am-12noon, 12:30pm-4pm
- Aviemore, Retail Park 10am-4pm

Wednesday 2 March

- Aviemore, Retail Park 9am-4pm

Thursday 3 March

- Aviemore, Retail Park 9am-4pm
- Newtonmore, Co-Op Car Park 9:30am-12noon
- Kingussie, Ardvonie Car Park 1pm-4pm

Friday 4 March

- Ardersier, Memorial Hall Car Park 9am-12noon
- Nairn, High Street 1pm-4pm
- Aviemore, Retail Park 9am-3pm

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. You may be able to order a PCR test to do at home, depending on availability.

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/>.

Money Counts Course Level 1 and 2 (flyer attached)

This course is aimed at anyone who is in a position to have a brief conversation with individuals around money worries, and aims to:

- Increase understanding of poverty and its impact
- Increase confidence to ask about money worries
- Increase knowledge of support services for money matters

Dates and times of the level 1 course:

- 8th March 10.00 – 10.45am
- 12th April 10.00 – 10.45am
- 15th August 2.00 – 2.45pm

Dates and times of the level 2 course:

- 28th March 2.00 – 3.30pm
- 20th April 10.30 – 12.00pm
- 14th June 10.00 – 11.30am

Details of how to register on the NHS Turas platform and find the course are in the attached flyer. The course has been developed in collaboration with NHS Highland, the Trussell Trust, Highland Council and Social Security Scotland.

For any enquiries contact, please email:

nhsh.healthimprovementtraining@nhs.scot

Highland Council Parking Enforcement Officers

5 new Parking enforcement Officers recruited in February 2022 to help support Highland communities.

The latest additions to the now 16 strong team of officers based across the Highlands completed their formal accreditation in February and will be operating in locations from Mallaig, Inverness & Ullapool.

Several of the new officers will be supporting Visitor Management in 2022 with particular focus on the Road to the Isles, based in Mallaig and the west coast and NC500, based in Ullapool.

These staff work a rolling rota covering 7 day enforcement across the Highlands.

Expect to see additional support to tourist hotspots during the 2022 summer season by our enforcement staff.

9-11 March 2022 Energy Action Scotland Annual Conference 2022 will take place over 6 events.

The Energy Action Scotland Annual Conference will run as an [online](#) event over three days from Wednesday 9 to Friday 11 March 2022. Over three days, six sessions will capture the key areas of policy and decision making as well as an in-depth focus on the fuel poverty landscape of support, service delivery, as well as discussion on how industry and business make that just transition towards the ever-approaching goals of the NetZero.

To book a place at the sessions you can follow the links to:

- Session 1: 10am, 9 March 2022 [Opening Addresses](#) Cabinet Secretary for Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport and a panel of Scotland policy experts.
- Session 2: 2pm, 9 March 2022 [Energy Markets in 2022](#)
- Session 3: 10am, 10 March 2022 [Next Steps](#)
- Session 4: 2pm, 10 March 2022 [Transforming our energy systems to the benefit of fuel poor households](#)
- Session 5: 10am, 11 March 2022 [The role that local government plays in supporting households in Fuel Poverty](#)
- Session 6: 2pm, 11 March 2022 [Meet Scotland's new Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel with Q&A](#)

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