

# Community Resilience Group Weekly Briefing - 59

## 18 March 2022

### Covid Update

Case numbers continue to increase across the NHS Highland area. Over the 7-day period up to 17 March there were 4648 new positive cases in Highland compared to 3590 positive cases in the 7-day period up to 10 March. The 7-day rate for this period is 1974.3 per 100,00 population, compared to 1524.9 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 including reinfections) 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.

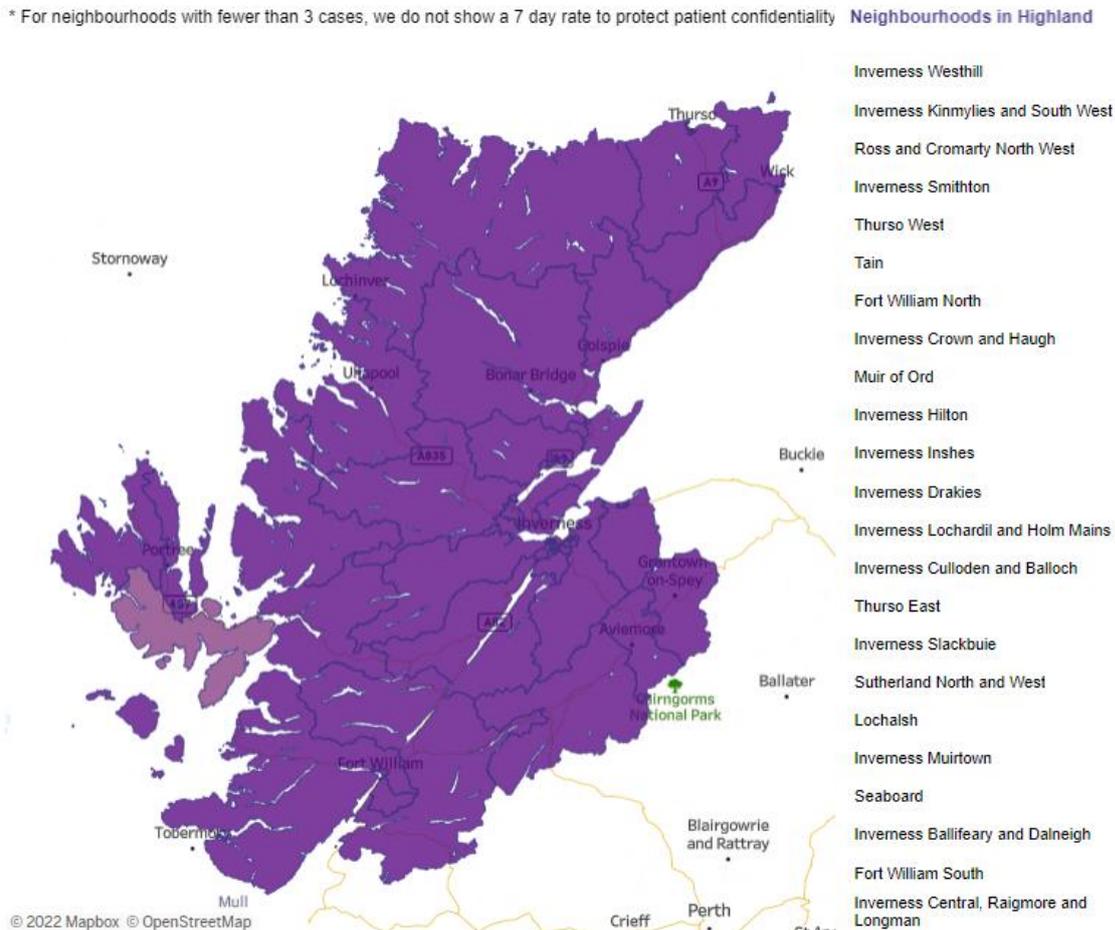
7 day positive cases in Highland based on people tested between 9 March 2022 and 15 March 2022

7 day positive cases	7 day positive rate per 100,000 population
4,648	1,974.3

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



## **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/>

### **Staying safe (face coverings and highest risk)**

Face coverings

By law you should still [wear a face covering in most indoor public places](#). This will be reviewed on 29 March 2022.

Distance Aware scheme

A Distance Aware badge or lanyard shows others you need more space or care.

Find out [how to get a Distance Aware badge or lanyard](#).

Highest Risk List

We have published [advice to help people on the Highest Risk List make informed decisions and access support services](#).

### **Scottish Government messages this week**

The First Minister gave a Coronavirus (COVID-19) statement to the Scottish Parliament on 15 March 2022.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/fm-statement-parliament-march-15-2022/>

### **Key Points include:**

The First Minister confirmed decisions on lifting the limited measures that remain in law, and set out the Government's intentions for the testing programme

There has been a recent increase in cases driven by the BA.2 sub lineage of the Omicron variant, which is estimated to be significantly more transmissible.

The ONS survey suggests that in the week to 6 March, one in 18 people in Scotland had COVID. The average number of daily new cases being reported this week is 12,000. There has also been a rise in the number of people who are in hospital with COVID. Three weeks ago, that stood at 1,060. This week it is 1,996.

BA.2 is now in Scotland our dominant strain, accounting for more than 80% of all reported cases. Encouragingly, there is no evidence that BA.2 causes more severe illness than BA.1, or that it is more effective at evading natural or vaccine immunity.

Given current case numbers, and the desirability of getting those back under control quickly, legal requirements to wear face coverings on public transport and most indoor public settings will continue until at least early April given the current spike in Covid case numbers.

The remaining legal requirements for businesses and service providers to collect customer details for contact tracing, and to have regard to and take reasonable measures set out in Covid guidance, will end as planned on Monday 21 March.

People without COVID-19 symptoms will no longer be asked to take regular lateral flow tests from 18 April. The change forms part of the Test and Protect Transition

Plan, which sets out how testing will become more targeted, with the aim of reducing serious harm from COVID-19.

The extension of the vaccination programme is ongoing, in line with JCVI advice. Invitation letters for 5-11 year-olds not in higher risk groups started arriving at the end of last week and first vaccinations are scheduled for Saturday. Additional Boosters for older adults in care homes started last week and appointments for everyone aged 75 and over start next week. Additional boosters for those who are immunosuppressed will start from mid-April.

Key changes and dates are as follows:

From Monday 21 March:

- With one exception, the remaining domestic legal measures will be lifted and replaced with appropriate guidance.
- There will no longer be a requirement for businesses and service providers to retain customer contact details.
- There will no longer be a requirement for businesses, places of worship and service providers to have regard to Scottish Government guidance on COVID, and to take reasonably practical measures set out in the guidance.
- The one remaining domestic legal measure will be:
- The requirement to wear face coverings on public transport, and in certain indoor settings.
- This rule will be reviewed in two weeks, with an expectation of it converting to guidance in Mid-April.

From 18 April:

- Most people without symptoms will no longer be asked to take COVID-19 tests
- Free lateral flow devices (LFDs) for the purposes of twice weekly routine testing will no longer be generally available. They will continue to be free for purposes for which testing continues to be advised – for clinical care, for health and social care workers and for people visiting vulnerable individuals in care homes or hospitals
- Until the end of April, people with symptoms should still isolate and get a PCR test
- Vaccinated close contacts of someone with COVID-19 should continue to test daily for seven days with LFDs
- All remaining COVID-related travel restrictions will be lifted.

Until the end of April:

- Close contacts will still be advised to use LFD tests for seven days, and on each occasion when visiting a hospital or care home.
- Those with symptoms will still be advised to get a PCR test.
- Contact tracing of positive cases will also continue.
- PCR test sites will continue, though opening hours may change

From 1 May:

- All routine population-wide testing will end, including for those who have symptoms.
- Contact tracing will end.

- Physical test sites will close (mobile testing units and lab capacity will be retained for longer term testing purposes).
- The public health advice for people who feel unwell will be to stay at home until they feel better, to reduce the risk of infecting other people.

## **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](http://www.nhsinform.scot/testing), or by calling 119. Test kits are also available at Community testing sites.

### **Community Testing 21 – 25 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 "Testalot" will in Inverness to carry out assisted testing and to provide LFD kits. Locations and opening times will be:

B&M car park, Telford Retail Park, Inverness IV3 5LE on

- Monday, 21 March 9:30am-4pm
- Tuesday, 22 March 9am-4pm

Tesco car park, Inshes Retail Park, Inverness IV2 3TW on

- Wednesday, 23 March 9am-4pm
- Thursday 24, March 9am-4pm
- Friday 25, March 9am-3.30pm

Just to emphasise that there are no specific outbreaks in these communities, 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.

There are no separate outreach activities planned for next week.

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](http://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](http://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/>.

### **Seeking Feedback on the Weekly Resilience Group Briefing - [Survey](#)**

As you know, the Scottish Government intend that the remaining legal Covid restrictions end on 21 March with a move to guidance and good practice. This feels like a good point to review the weekly briefing and to ask for some feedback from you all.

We have created a very short online survey seeking your feedback and would be grateful if you could complete it by 31 March 2022. You can find a link to the survey here <https://forms.office.com/r/WuWuczbyL9>.

### **Scottish Local Government Elections – May 2022**

The [NOTICE OF ELECTION](#) for the Highland Council election has been published and is now on our website.

A total of 74 Councillors are to be elected for the 21 electoral wards situated in the Highland Council area, ranging from three or four members in each ward.

Anyone wishing to stand, can download the nomination forms from the [Council's website](#)

Completed nomination papers must be hand delivered between 10am on Tuesday 15 March 2022 and no later than 4.00 pm on Wednesday 30 March 2022 to the appropriate Local Depute Returning Officer as detailed in the notice of election.

The election is scheduled to be held on Thursday 5 May 2022 and all relevant information can be found on the [Council's website](#), this includes key statutory dates.

### **Baillie Gifford fund open for applications**

The Baillie Gifford Multi-Year Awards fund, which aims to support grassroots community organisations across Scotland is open to organisations with an annual income of under £250,000

Priority will be given to projects that can demonstrate a fit with one of the following priorities:

- Reducing isolation in Scotland's communities – this includes all forms of isolation whether due to health, disability, rurality, or projects which aim to tackle barriers to inclusion. This list is not exhaustive.
- Supporting financial inclusion – this can include food poverty-related projects and those that seek to maximise the income of families that may be struggling due to the impact of Universal Credit, disability, in work poverty and so on.
- Overcoming homelessness – this includes any work to tackle homelessness in our communities.
- Improving employability and enterprise, particularly in young people.
- One grant will be to a local sports club to help people participate in grassroots sport.

The deadline for applications is 28 April,

<https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/funding-available/baillie-gifford-multi-year>

### **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](mailto:policy6@highland.gov.uk)

### **Helpful Links**

Welfare Support Team -

[www.highland.gov.uk/directory\\_record/102970/benefit\\_advice](http://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](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/940/self-isolation_support_grant)

Energy Advice

[energyadvisors@hi.homeenergyscotland.org](mailto: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](http://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1422811/supporting_community_resilience/category/155/grants_for_community_groups)

HTSI Community Group Helpline

Telephone Number 01349 808022