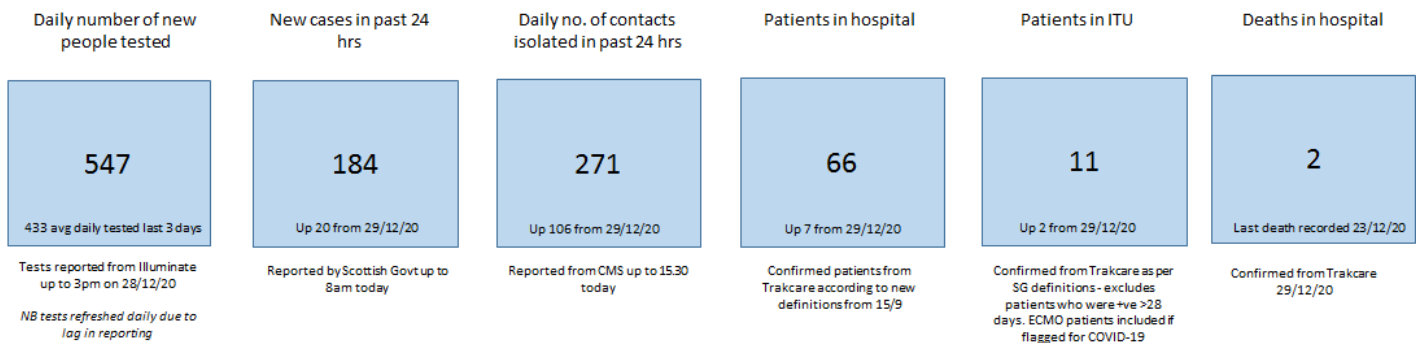
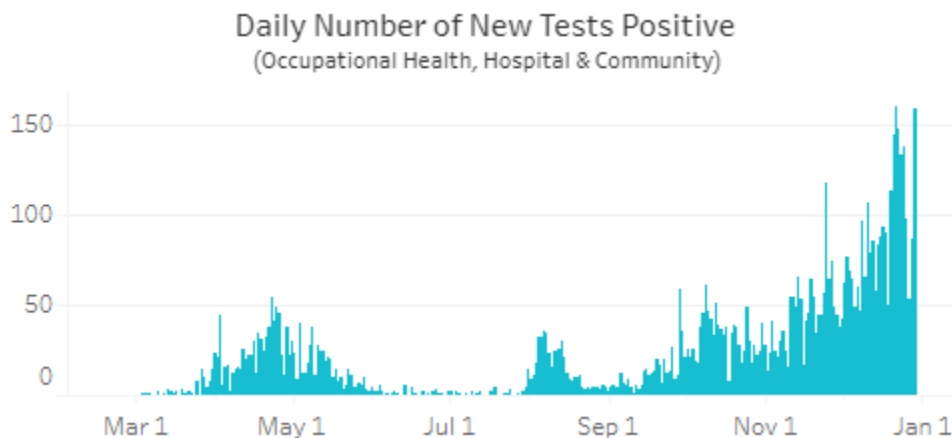


Here is the brief for Wednesday 30 December 2020.

**COVID infections in Scotland** Today has seen the single highest number of confirmed infections across Scotland since mass testing began – **2045**. The new variant of COVID-19 is a significant factor in the increase, and we have more on that later on in the brief. Here is the local data for Grampian:



As you can see above, the picture in Grampian is extremely fragile. The chart below illustrates our testing figures since March (bear in mind mass testing was not in place at the very start of the pandemic, so cases then were likely higher than reported).



If you click [here](#) you can visit the Public Health Scotland website, which includes neighbourhood figures for all local authority areas in Scotland.

**Oxford University/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine approved** As announced earlier today, a second COVID-19 vaccine – developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca - has been approved for use in the UK. It will be used alongside the Pfizer/BioNTech jab already in circulation. In common with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, two doses are required

The Joint Committee on Vaccination & Immunisation (JCVI) is recommending that the priority should be to ensure as many people in at-risk groups get their first dose, rather than providing the required two doses in as short a time as possible. Everyone will still receive a second dose, and this will be within 12 weeks of the first. The JCVI have made this recommendation following thorough analysis of the evidence from both vaccine trials. We know many of you have already had your first injection and will

want to understand what this will mean in practical terms for your second appointment. **We are awaiting further guidance on this and will share this as soon as we are able to. In the meantime, please attend vaccine appointments as arranged.**

**COVID-19 vaccine – please do not double book** There have been a number of reports of staff putting their name down for both the ARI clinic and Peer vaccination and taking whichever offer comes first. This is resulting in a large number of cancellations and significant work in filling these slots at the last minute. Please only book through one source, we don't want to waste any vaccine due to people cancelling at short notice. Overall, the clinics and Peer have gone extremely well, we have clinics arranged well into January and will continue to run them while there is demand.

**The B.1.1.7 variant. Be particularly vigilant** It is estimated that 38% of COVID-19 cases in Scotland are now caused by the new virus variant, which studies have shown to be 50% more infective than the original type of virus. Nearly 16% of Scottish cases detected last week were in Grampian, more than might be expected from our 11% of the Scottish population, so this new variant virus is definitely here. The messages about prevention have not changed, but the degree of rigour with which these should be adhered to must increase if we are to protect friends, loved ones, and the wider population. As well as the usual advice about frequent hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, keeping physically distant (remember two metres apart in shops!) wearing a face covering and not going to work with symptoms, we must add avoiding long spells in poorly ventilated indoor spaces. The virus can spread through the air in tiny droplets that can persist in the air, getting to people further away than the two metres and landing on surfaces throughout a poorly ventilated room. Be very careful, and don't have an Unhappy New Year.

**Reminder - schools provision for key workers** Information was circulated in the brief on 23 December on the provisions in place for the child/ren of key workers in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, and Moray from 5 January 2021. Please refer back to that email and communication direct from the relevant council if you wish to request a school place. Managers and staff members are expected to work flexibly to meet service needs over this period. The Scottish Government guidance can be found [here](#). If you have any queries please contact your local Council using the following links [Aberdeen City Council](#) [Aberdeenshire Council](#) [Moray Council](#)

**Thought for the day** Confirmation that a second vaccine has been approved for use in the UK is definitely a brighter light at the end of the tunnel, but with infections surging to a record high in Scotland today, in the tunnel we most definitely remain. As those of you working in the acute sector will already know, the hospitals are extremely busy as the virus and the 'usual business' of winter combine to pile on the pressure. Add to this a highly transmissible strain of the virus, fast becoming the dominant strain, and we have an extremely volatile situation. If you follow NHS Grampian on social media, you will have seen colleagues in Public Health and Critical Care unite today to call on the public to celebrate Hogmanay at home and only with their household this year. They are also speaking to all of us working in health & social care. We owe it to ourselves, our colleagues, our families, and our patients to heed every warning.

**Items for the brief?** If you have something you would like to be considered for inclusion in this brief, please send this to [gram.communications@nhs.scot](mailto:gram.communications@nhs.scot). Messages should be clearly marked as 'Daily brief – for consideration'. Please be aware that space is limited, and items are prioritised based on subject matter and relevance to all staff groups.