

Here is the brief for Tuesday 15 December 2020.

**Protection Levels update** Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire will move into [Level 3 restrictions](#) from 6pm on Friday (18/12). You can see the full detail of what this will mean by clicking on the link above; this is a summary of the key points:

- Travel **out of** Level 3 areas should be for essential reasons only. This covers work, education, or welfare travel. Going on holiday, whether elsewhere in Scotland, the UK, or abroad, is not classed as an essential journey. Equally, travel **into** Level 3 areas should only be for essential reasons.
- A designated hospital visitor (in addition to essential visits for end of life care, birth partners, young children, or patients with mental health issues) is still permitted in Level 3 restrictions IF clinicians judge it to be safe and appropriate **and** with physical distancing in place. We will continue to take a person-centred approach to visiting, taking into account the patient situation and the environment they are being cared for in. People in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire should only visit hospitals in Moray (which remains in Level 1) if the visit is genuinely essential.
- Cafes, bars, and restaurants must close by 6pm (with last entry at 5pm) and may not serve alcohol. This covers both indoor and outdoor premises. The maximum number of people able to meet in these premises (indoors and outdoors) is six, from no more than two households.

As noted above, it must be remembered that Moray remains in [Level 1](#). It is vital that travel into Moray from Aberdeen City or Aberdeenshire is genuinely essential travel only.

Following the announcement from the First Minister, we shared this statement from Susan Webb, Director of Public Health, on our social media accounts:

"I am asking everyone in the North-east of Scotland to ask themselves if they are honestly taking the same level of precautions that they were back in April and May? The virus poses no less a threat to us now than it did then. The case numbers we are seeing at present are not solely the result of outbreaks in care homes or workplaces. This virus is circulating widely, and we are seeing community spread in our towns and villages. The start of a vaccination programme is light at the end of the tunnel - but we are still in that tunnel and will stay there for some months to come. We have all got to make changes to our behaviour. We all have to play our part. Anyone can catch COVID-19, and anyone can spread it.

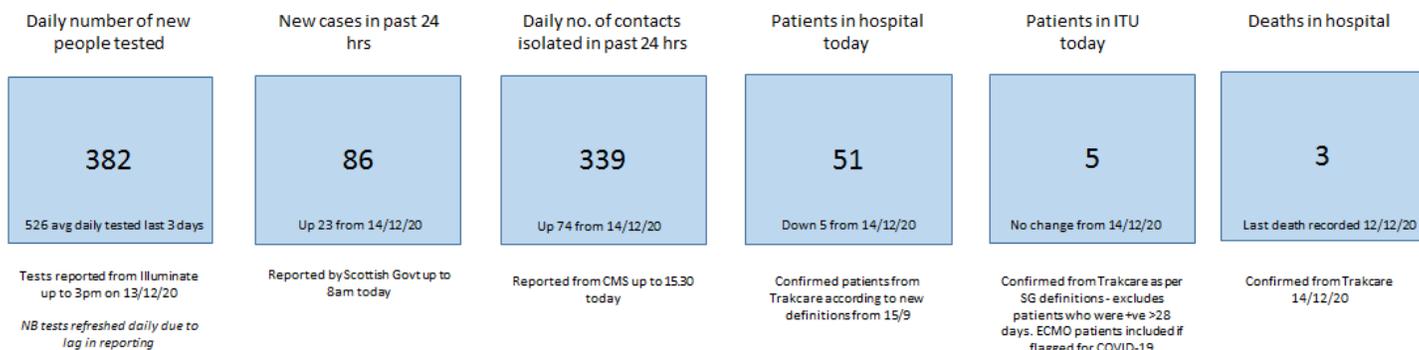
"With this in mind, I want to echo the words of the First Minister and urge everyone to think extremely carefully about their Christmas plans. The easing of restrictions for a short period does not oblige any of us to gather indoors with other households. To do so remains extremely risky. We know you hold the people working in health & social care in high esteem. You turned out in your thousands to clap for carers during the first wave of the pandemic. The greatest gift you can give the NHS this year is to limit the spread of this virus."

**New strain of COVID-19** You will no doubt have seen coverage of a new strain of COVID-19. You can see more information on this on the [Public Health England](#) website, but the key points are as follows:

- This variant on the virus has been identified in just over 1,100 cases courtesy of enhanced monitoring by Public Health England.
- Nine cases have been identified in Scotland, all in the NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde area.

- There is no evidence at present to suggest this new strain has any impact on disease severity, antibody response, or vaccine efficacy.
- It is not uncommon for viruses to undergo mutations; seasonal influenza mutates every year. Variants of COVID-19 have been observed in other countries, such as Spain.

**Grampian figures** Here is today's data. If you are interested in the situation elsewhere in Scotland, click [here](#) to see all the data published by Public Health Scotland.



**COVID-19 vaccine** We know you are all incredibly keen to get the vaccine to protect yourselves, your families and the patients you care for. In order to run a smooth immunisation process – and vitally, reduce any unnecessary waste of vaccine – if you have requested a clinic appointment and are then able to get the jab from a peer vaccinator, please let the clinic team know. If you have arranged peer vaccination, please stick with that arrangement. Do not take the jab from an alternative peer vaccinator. This will ensure both clinics and peer vaccination can run as effectively as possible.

**Thought for the day** Confirmation that Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire will move into Level 3 restrictions from Friday ends several weeks of debate on this matter. Whether you agree or disagree with the decision, whether you feel it comes too late, whether you still have concerns about the forthcoming easing of restrictions for Christmas, we now at least know where we stand. Each of us living in City and 'Shire have a duty to play our part and stick to the new rules. This is not only for ourselves or our families, it is also for our colleagues working on the frontline of health & social care right across Grampian. For our readers based in Moray, we will respect your position in Level 1 and know that you will do the same in return. As Susan Webb said today, we must all part our part.

**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.