

## In this issue:

- COVID-19 & flu vaccination update
- Public Health update
- Feature – Vaccine effectiveness
- Latest messages & useful links

Welcome to the latest edition of our NHS Grampian newsletter, which aims to keep you informed through regular updates and articles of interest regarding the health and care of the Grampian population.

### Covid-19 vaccination update

The vaccine booster programme is vital in ensuring maintenance of immunity amongst those most vulnerable. Our efforts are channelled into rolling this out as quickly as possible, seeking the security of staffing to maintain clinics.

As temperatures drop and more activities take place indoors, ventilation becomes more important in preventing transmission. We are working with schools and businesses to raise awareness of its importance, and our communications messages relate to all – in communities and homes.

Regular testing, particularly in health and care settings will help to reduce the risk of outbreaks amongst those most vulnerable and our communication efforts will be aimed thus. Reiteration of the work from home guidance continues to reduce the number of

interactions and contacts whilst infection levels remain so high.

Relatively small differences can make a huge difference between stable and growing case numbers. Far better to act now with small actions than later with more drastic ones.

Here are sombre statistics that underline our need to act to prevent people becoming ill, suffering long term disability, serious illness and death. With the exception of England, these European countries have continued with many protective measures in addition to their vaccination programme.

#### Rates by country per 100,000

Spain	Under 20 per 100,000*
France	20-60 per 100,000*
Scotland	326 per 100,000* <sup>1</sup>
England	477 per 100,000* <sup>1</sup>

*\*European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention*

*\*1UKG*

*<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/cases>*

### **COVID vaccine certification – what about boosters?**

You may have been asked or wanted to know yourself why the COVID Status app (or indeed the paper certificate) only records the first and second dose of vaccine, and not boosters. We've been advised that, as boosters are not required for international travel or domestic use, they are not currently included in the certification process. This may be subject to change in the coming months, and further discussions are

expected at both a UK and EU level about what is required.

### Seasonal Flu

Key things you can help with:

- Remind everyone not to contact their GP practice.
- Remind everyone not to attend their appointment too early (5 mins is ideal)
- Don't attend if you have any symptoms of COVID-19

We have also developed a new Vaccination web site, <https://www.grampianvax.com/> here you will find information on who is entitled to 'flu/COVID-19 booster, how they will get their appointment, and how to rebook.

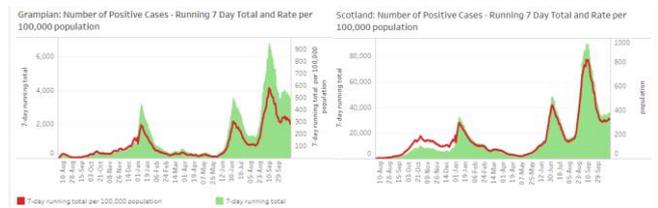
### Public Health Update (as at 22.10.21)

#### Modest rise nationally in new cases - which remain at very high levels

In the week to 22 October, cases rose by almost 7% at Scotland level, affecting many of the smaller and more rural Boards. Glasgow, Grampian, Lothian and Tayside have all stabilised albeit at high levels. By plateauing at 329 per 100,000 in mid-October, Scotland is significantly higher than the previous plateau of 150 per 100,000 in early August. This is a pattern we have seen since the start of the pandemic, where we have a 'between surge' rate that is steadily rising.

The rate of transmission in Scotland is estimated to be between 0.8 and 1.0. We know by now that relatively small differences in transmission can make the difference between stable and growing case numbers. In the light of this, it is welcome news that the number of contacts has reduced by 14% on average when comparing surveys 23-29th September to 7-13th October. This may reflect changes due to school holidays but could also reflect the heightened public perception of infection risk. Mask wearing indoors has

reduced from 87% to 81% but remains at high levels. All of these 'light touch' measures will help to curb sustained growth. But the situation remains fragile.



Hospital admissions in Scotland are fluctuating with a slight uptick in recent days. The pressure in ITU has been sustained throughout October and accelerated in recent days. Sadly, on average, over the last month (from wc 20th September), 145 people died in Scotland each week, where COVID was mentioned on the death certificate (139 in the latest week). This compares to a weekly average of 415 at the beginning of January.

### Feature – Vaccine effectiveness

Vaccination is over 90% effective at preventing deaths from the Delta variant of COVID-19, according to new research published recently. A study, involving the Universities of Strathclyde and Edinburgh has found the Pfizer vaccine is 90% effective, and the AstraZeneca vaccine 91% effective, in preventing deaths in people who have been double vaccinated, but who have tested positive for coronavirus in the community. The Moderna vaccine is also available in Scotland; no deaths have been recorded in those who have been double vaccinated with it. As such, researchers say it has not been possible to estimate its effectiveness in preventing death. The study, using data from the Scotland-wide EAVE II Covid-19 surveillance platform, is the first to show across an entire country how effective vaccines are at preventing death from the Delta variant, which is now the dominant form of COVID-19 in the UK and many other countries. Researchers analysed data from 5.4 million people in Scotland between 1

April and 27 September 2021. Further information on the study is available [here](#).

## Latest messages and useful links

### **Coronavirus: lessons learned to date**

The Health & Social Care, and Science & Technology Committees at Westminster have published a report, looking at the UK's response to the pandemic. Copy of the report available [here](#)

### **Useful links:**

- <https://www.covidvaxgrampian.com/>
- <https://www.nhsgrampian.org/covid-19/covid-19-public-information/subpages/covid-19-community-testing/>
- Information and updates can also be found in the NHS Grampian Daily Brief [click here](#)