

## State of the epidemic in Scotland, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021

There are indications that the total number of people becoming infected with Covid is falling slowly: latest modelled estimates are that there are a total of 6,800 people infected each day<sup>1</sup>. This compares to an average of 1,591 in the average daily reported cases in the 7 days to 21<sup>st</sup> January<sup>2</sup>. The number has fallen by around a third from the peak of 2,323 cases in the week to 04<sup>th</sup> January. However, our current position is still at a high level with 200 weekly cases per 100,000. This compares to 130 weekly cases per 100,000 on 20<sup>th</sup> December and 2 weekly cases per 100,000 on 20<sup>th</sup> July.

In a UK context, the level of infection in Scotland (1.0% people currently testing positive for Covid on 10-16<sup>th</sup> Jan) is below England (1.9%), Wales (1.5%) and Northern Ireland (both 1.6%)<sup>3</sup>. The rate of confirmed cases is lower in Scotland than other nations, but so is the rate of testing. Deaths in Scotland (9 per million on 19<sup>th</sup> January) are lower than the other nations (England 19 per million, Northern Ireland 11 and Wales 14).

Despite a 22% fall in confirmed cases between 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> January, Glasgow and North Lanarkshire now have the highest case rate, with 294 new cases being reported per 100,000 in the past week. The three island Local Authorities have seen case rates increase over this period. There have been small increases in Clackmannanshire and East Lothian, but cases have fallen in all other parts of Scotland<sup>4</sup>.

The Scottish Contact Survey measures times and settings that people mix where they could potentially spread Covid. The survey asks about situations where people may transmit Covid and how many people they met in those places. The level of contacts that people are having is now lower than at any time since the epidemic started in Scotland. Average contacts have reduced from 3.6 (over 24-30 Dec) to 2.5 (over 07-13 Jan)<sup>1</sup>. Behind this 31% fall, we've seen the proportion of people visiting non-essential shops decreased significantly from 31% to 6% in the last two weeks and those visiting another's home has reduced from 41% to 25%<sup>1</sup>. This shows the Stay at Home regulations that came into effect on 5 January are having an impact on behaviour, and there is high level of compliance with the regulations.

This is supported by evidence on self-reported compliance with the restrictions: on 19-21 Jan, 81% people reported 'complete' or 'almost complete' compliance, and this number had increased since before Christmas.<sup>5</sup>

The R value for Scotland on 20<sup>th</sup> January was between 0.8 and 1.1 with a growth rate between -4% and +1%<sup>1</sup>. This, together with evidence on contacts suggests that

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/?term=modelling&cat=filter&topics=Coronavirus%20in%20Scotland&publicationTypes=research-and-analysis&page=1>

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/>

<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurvey/pilof/previousReleases>

<sup>4</sup> Public Health Scotland Covid dashboard: [https://public.tableau.com/profile/phs.covid.19#!/vizhome/COVID-19DailyDashboard\\_15960160643010/Overview](https://public.tableau.com/profile/phs.covid.19#!/vizhome/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview)

<sup>5</sup> YouGov, Results are taken from questions run on behalf of Scottish Government on the YouGov online omnibus survey. The sample is demographically and geographically representative of adults 18+ across Scotland, with c.1000 responses each week. Total sample size on 19-21 January was 1029 adults. 'complete' or 'almost complete' compliance refers to respondents who rated themselves 6 or 7 on a scale of 1-7 for the question: **Thinking about ALL of the guidance from the Scottish Government on what to do and what not to do during the Coronavirus pandemic (including distancing, protection measures and all restrictions)...On a scale of 1-7, where 1 is 'Not at all' and 7 is 'Completely, to what extent do you feel you are following the regulations and guidance?**

we're likely to see total infections and confirmed cases fall further. This low level of contact prevents Covid transmission that will show up in confirmed cases over the next week.

After many weeks of the B.1.1.7 or VOC-202012/01 variant of SARS- CoV-2 increasing its share of confirmed cases, this has levelled off despite significant variation across Scotland. On 10/11<sup>th</sup> 62% of cases tested via the UK Government laboratories which had a profile consistent with the new variant of Covid-19, compared with 64% on 17/18<sup>th</sup> Jan)<sup>6</sup>. This is likely to be because of the lockdown and in particular reduced travel across Scotland. This means that when travel is permitted that there is likely to be a significant increase in new cases as the variant becomes dominant across the rest of Scotland.

The new variant of Covid is more transmissible, but evidence on how much more is still developing. Our modelling suggests this could be 70% more transmissible: On 04<sup>th</sup> January, the previous state of the epidemic report published modelling from three scenarios<sup>7</sup>. Projections for the scenario where new variant 70% more transmissible estimated 2,000 people in hospital for Covid by 18<sup>th</sup> January. On that date there were 1,959 people in hospital with Covid<sup>2</sup>.

The situation in London, where the vast majority of new cases are the new Covid variant, is that while the proportion of people with Covid is much higher than in Scotland, the proportion has fallen since the end of December<sup>3</sup>. This suggests that it will be likely for cases to fall in Scotland, even with a variant that is 70% more transmissible.

Numbers in hospital with confirmed Covid continue to rise. 20<sup>th</sup> January was the first day with over 2,000 people in hospital with confirmed Covid. However, the rate of growth in is slowing: people in hospital with confirmed Covid was 9% higher than a week before. The rate of growth was 25% in the week before that<sup>2</sup>. In addition, there was a fall in hospital admissions for people with Covid from a peak of 220 on 11<sup>th</sup> January to 126 on 16<sup>th</sup> January.

Modelling suggest that people in hospital for Covid will continue to increase over the next two weeks though at a slowing rate<sup>1</sup>. In the spell of increase in Covid during September and October, the peak of cases was 184 weekly cases per 100,000 on 24<sup>th</sup> October. The consequent peak in numbers with Covid in hospital was on 03<sup>rd</sup> November, 10 days later. The peak for cases during this wave of Covid was on 08<sup>th</sup> January with 298 weekly cases per 100,000. We have now had 12 days of growth in hospital Covid patients since then<sup>2</sup>. The difference from October is that our starting point was a higher number of cases per head this time. This explains why it takes longer to reach the peak in demand for Covid hospital care.

There were 368 deaths registered where Covid was mentioned on week to 17<sup>th</sup> January. This is lower than the week before (391 deaths), and 56% of the peak week back in April (662 deaths)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Public Health Scotland: <https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/9-september-2020/dashboard/>

<sup>7</sup> Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2020/12/avirus-covid-19-state-of-the-epidemic-in-scotland-4-january-2021/documents/state-of-the-epidemic-in-scotland-4-january-2021/state-of-the-epidemic-in-scotland-4-january-2021/govscot%3Adocument/State%20of%20the%20epidemic%20-%204%20Jan%2021.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> National Records of Scotland: <https://www.nr.scotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/general-publications/weekly-and-monthly-data-on-births-and-deaths/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland>

The proportion likely to be vaccinated for COVID-19 has remains high, with just over three quarters (79%) reporting they are likely to be vaccinated. People aged 65+ are the age group most likely to be vaccinated (91% saying they are likely to be vaccinated compared with 71% among those aged 18-44)<sup>5</sup>. The first vaccines were administered on Tuesday 8th of December and 334,871 had received their first dose by 21<sup>th</sup> January 2021, over a 50% increase in the last week<sup>2</sup>.