

Coronavirus – everyone urged to stay safe this Hogmanay

The council leaders and NHS Lothian's Director of Public Health have teamed up to remind everyone to stick to ongoing public safety guidance and to bring in the bells safely.

On Thursday a further 16,857 people tested positive for Covid-19 in Scotland, which is the highest daily case number of the pandemic so far.

The latest public health guidance, which came into effect from 26 December, limits the numbers at outdoor public events to 500, resulting in the cancellation of the live events planned for Edinburgh's Hogmanay including the Torchlight Procession, Party at the Bells, midnight fireworks and the Loony Dook on New Year's Day.

Council Leader Adam McVey said: "As we approach Hogmanay, case numbers are continuing to increase significantly and I want to echo the First Minister's advice to stay at home as much as possible in the coming days in a bid to slow down the spread. And if we do get together with friends and family, please limit this to no more than three households.

"Large gatherings at Hogmanay risk increasing further transmissions in our communities and put further pressure on our NHS staff and other vital services. I can't stress enough the importance of following the rules around handwashing,

mask-wearing and ventilation and testing. Visit our website for details of community testing sites or to order a home testing kit.

“As 2021 comes to an end, and with more people getting vaccinated and boosted, we can look more positively towards 2022. But for now, and this Hogmanay, please keep following the guidance and keep yourself and your family safe and protect our NHS.

Deputy Leader Cammy Day said: “The safety of Edinburgh’s residents remains our priority as we continue the battle against Covid-19 and the latest Omicron variant. This has meant that sadly no live events, including the midnight fireworks, will be taking place this year.

“Following the cancellation, Edinburgh’s Hogmanay have announced the release of a new film, ‘Journey Home’, which pays tribute to the hope, love and optimism that people feel when celebrating Hogmanay with those that matter most after such a challenging year, whilst expressing a positive look forward to the future. I would encourage you all to tune in as we bid farewell to 2021 – and look forward to a better and more positive 2022.”

Full details of Edinburgh’s Hogmanay film can be found at www.edinburghshogmanay.com

Dona Milne, Director of Public Health, NHS Lothian, said: “We know that everyone wants to welcome in 2022 and enjoy the festivities, however we would ask people to do so responsibly following public health guidance.

“Please do not mix in groups of more than three households and take a Lateral Flow Test before you go out or have people round. If you have not already done so, please make getting your booster your first priority of 2022.

“By taking these small steps, you can help stop the spread of

Omicron.

“Remember, the Omicron variant is much more transmissible than previous strains. Although a smaller percentage of infected people may need hospital care, it is a smaller percentage of a far greater number of people, so still a lot of people.

“So, even if the admission rate is a third of what we have seen with previous strains, it is expected that the scale of Omicron could still be higher than we have seen before.”

Community test centres and mobile test centres are open for people with no Covid symptoms. Full details of these, and how to order home lateral flow testing kits, are [available online](#).



2018 Midnight Hogmanay Fireworks