

Coronavirus – Scotland’s vaccinators give a booster jag every second in national effort

The Scottish Government has announced that almost 80% of eligible adults have been “boosted by the bells” or given their third booster dose of Covid-19 vaccine as at 30 December.

More than 2.98 million people have been given their booster dose thanks to the work by vaccinators and other healthcare staff at vaccination centres all over Scotland.

Even with high infection levels meaning that some people have had to delay getting their booster dose, the vaccination programme has almost met the target of 80% set by the government.

Health Secretary Humza Yousaf said: “Since the emergence of the Omicron variant there has been an heroic and monumental effort by everyone on Scotland’s vaccination programme to make sure we can deliver booster vaccines as quickly as possible – my heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the delivery of the programme and to everyone coming forward to be boosted.

“In the week ending 26 December – with staff quite rightly taking a break on Christmas Day and Boxing Day – and with many areas suffering high infection rates, we achieved record-

breaking numbers of vaccinations, with 77,927 jabbed on the busiest day – that’s more than one every second during vaccine centre opening hours.

“We know that many people have been unable to attend their appointments due to the virus. This has been the most common reason for people cancelling their appointment via the helpline. Anyone who has had to delay their booster due to a COVID-19 infection or isolation period can arrange a new appointment, 28 days after their positive PCR test.

“To deliver maximum benefits we need as many people as possible to get boosted as quickly as possible. It is everyone’s duty to get a jab if you haven’t already – vaccination could literally save your life as well as keeping family, friends and loved ones safe.

“And it is never too late to receive your booster – or even a first or second dose – so please come forward as soon as possible, as there is capacity available to get you vaccinated.”

Young people aged 12-15 who are still to get a second dose will be invited to reschedule appointments or attend a drop-in clinic from 3 January 2022.

Drop in clinics

Edinburgh: Edinburgh International Conference Centre, The Exchange, 150 Morrison St, Edinburgh EH3 8EE. Open each day apart the holidays from 9am until 5pm. Christmas Eve and Hogmanay: Open 9am until 1pm. CLOSED: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year’s Day and January 2.

Lowland Hall, Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston, Newbridge EH28 8NB. Open each day apart from holidays from 9.30am until 6.30pm. CLOSED Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year’s Day and January 2.

Smaller venues in Edinburgh are also available as below. See table below:

Leith Community Treatment Centre, 12 Junction Place, Edinburgh EH6 5JQ	Open: Dec 22, 23 Dec 24, 29, 30, 31 Jan 5, 6, 7 Closed: Dec 25, 26, 27, 28	9.30 – 11.30am – 1 -6pm NB Closing 5pm on 24 Dec.
Pennywell All Care Centre, 1 Macmillan Crescent, Edinburgh EH4 4WL	Open: Dec 22, 23 Dec 24, 29, 30, 31 Jan 5, 6, 7 Closed: Dec 25, 26, 27, 28	9.30 – 11.30am – 1 -3pm
Sighthill Health Centre, 380 Calder Road, Edinburgh EH11 4AU	Open: Dec 22, 23 Dec 24, 29, 30, 31 Jan 5, 6, 7 Closed: Dec 25, 26, 27, 28	9.30 – 11.30am – 1 -3pm
Ocean Terminal (first floor)	Closed: Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and January 2.	12 – 6.30pm
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NHS Lothian encourages all remaining over-18s to visit their local drop-in vaccination clinic or book an appointment for their Covid-19 vaccine booster.

Those aged 12-17 are also welcome to attend any of the local drop-in clinics for their second dose if it has been at least 12 weeks since their first dose and they have not tested positive for Covid-19 in the past 12 weeks.

Over 76,920 people were vaccinated across Lothian in the run up to Christmas*, however appointments still remain across the region, allowing people the opportunity to receive their vaccination as soon as possible.

Pat Wynne, Director of Nursing for Primary and Community Care,

NHS Lothian, said: “I would like to thank everyone who has come forward for vaccination so far, every vaccination counts towards making our region safer.

“Getting a booster doesn’t mean you won’t get Covid-19, but it reduces the chances of it and significantly enhances your protection against serious illness – it could literally save your, or someone else’s, life.”

In recent weeks there has been a huge increase in appointments in Lothian, with 71% of those eligible for a booster having now received one. While this is excellent progress, we need as many people as possible to get boosted as quickly as possible. We want to get to, or as close as possible to, having 80% of eligible adults boosted by the Bells.

NHS Lothian has increased its vaccination capacity hugely in December with the reopening of the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) in Edinburgh City Centre. It has never been easier for members of the public to receive a Covid-19 vaccination booster.

There has been a rise in the number of missed appointments over the festive period, with 17% of people not attending their appointments.

This has resulted in 9,951 available appointments going unused in the Lothian region over Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (27, 28 and 29 December).

Mr Wynne added: “We know that missed appointments are in part due to the number of Covid-19 cases in the area, which is in turn making people ineligible for their vaccination. But it’s not the whole story and, if I’m honest, it’s a little disappointing. We have a huge amount of extra capacity across Lothian with teams of vaccinators standing ready to ensure as many people as possible can get boosted by the Bells.

“We know people are really busy at this time of year, but we

urge you to make time for it. If you haven't been boosted but could be, because it is 12 weeks since your second dose, please book an appointment now or go along to a drop-in clinic. If you have an appointment for January, you can drop in now and your later appointment will be cancelled for you. There are plenty of slots available and our centres are running very efficiently with very low queue times.

"Please don't delay. Every booster administered is a step on the road back to normality."

The vaccination programme has been stepped up in recent weeks as part of its campaign to halt the spread of the Omicron variant across the region. Due to the highly transmissible nature of the new variant, NHS Lothian's Director of Public Health, Dona Milne, is urging the public to act quickly as they welcome in 2022.

Dona Milne, Director of Public Health, NHS Lothian, said: "The Omicron variant is much more transmissible than previous strains. This means that although a smaller percentage of infected people may require hospitalisation, 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.

"I would ask everyone celebrating the new year to do so whilst following the public health guidance and be responsible as they enjoy the festivities. Please prioritise getting your vaccine and do not mix with more than three households and undertake a Lateral Flow Test before you mix with people. By taking these small steps, you can help stop the spread of Omicron."