

Coronavirus – today's figures and new analysis

From today Public Health Scotland (PHS) has delved a bit deeper into the number of patients in hospital in its regular report. The health body has differentiated between those who are in hospital “because of” Covid-19 and those for whom the virus is coincidental to another condition.

PHS say that there are more older people in hospital because of Covid-19 compared to those “with” the virus.

The report states that “Knowing this information can help signal whether population-level changes in public health measures may be warranted, such as a tightening or easing of restrictions”. The report is reproduced in full below.

There are 14,486 new cases reported today, although there continues to be a large volume of tests being processed by labs and this has led to a delay in turnaround times. As at 2pm on Friday there are 1,323 people in hospital with recently confirmed Covid-19 and 48 people in intensive care of whom 13 have been in ICU for more than 28 days.

In Lothian 2,253 new cases have been reported which is a slight increase on Thursday's figures.

According to the most recent report from Public Health Scotland published today 60% of acute hospitalisations in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and in Grampian in the first few days of January were determined to be “because of” Covid-19 contrasting with patients in hospital mainly for other reasons but who have contracted Covid coincidentally.

Scottish Labour deputy leader Jackie Baillie said: “The publication of this data is welcome as it allows us to understand how the Omicron variant is affecting the people of Scotland and the NHS. But the data remains incomplete for the whole of Scotland and only a wider study will provide the conclusive findings that we need.

“That said, we should welcome the fact that the rate of hospitalisation appears to be lower than for the Delta variant, but it is clear that our NHS is under severe strain, not least due to staff absence, and lives are being put at risk.

“A&E departments are at breaking point, staff are working round the clock, delayed discharge is increasing and the government has warned that the situation may deteriorate even further.

“That’s why it’s vital that the SNP government matches its rhetoric with action and pulls out all the stops to protect public health and our national health service.”

The Scottish Conservative health spokesman Dr Sandesh Gulhane preferred to target the Test and Protect numbers, saying that the system urgently needed more resources after new data showed Scotland is now failing to meet WHO contact tracing targets.

The WHO has set a target of reaching 80% of contacts within 72 hours, but in the week to 26 December in Scotland the Scottish Conservatives say that only 54.2% were contacted within the three day limit, and that the PHS report showed that a third of contact tracing cases were incomplete in the last week of data. According to the Conservatives this is triple the rate

from just one month ago.

Dr Gulhane said: “These latest figures for Test and Protect are very worrying.

“They suggest the testing system is faltering under severe strain.

“Humza Yousaf must urgently dedicate more resources towards Test and Protect to stop this vital service floundering just when we need it most.

“We have seen throughout this pandemic that effective contact tracing can be the difference between getting the virus under control and letting it run out of control.

“It’s of vital importance that the SNP Government urgently gives Test and Protect more resources. Humza Yousaf cannot leave existing contact tracing workers without extra help.”



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