

Here is the brief for Friday 30 July 2021.

An announcement is expected from the Scottish Government early next week on the removal of many of the remaining COVID-19 restrictions. This represents the final symbolic step back to a more normal way of life. In light of this, the brief takes a slightly different format today, as we consider some of the wider issues.

Are we turning the corner on COVID-19?

In truth, we don't know. Across Scotland and in Grampian, many of the measures that help us to understand how the virus is behaving have been going in the right direction for several weeks, but there are multiple factors at play. The surge in June was driven by Delta, Euro 2020 and social mixing. The school holiday, taking leave away from work and warmer weather with more mixing outside seems to have had a positive impact on case numbers since then. If these *are* the driving factors, the situation could be just as easily reversed towards the end of the summer period.

The good news is that with more people getting vaccinated we are getting closer to population immunity. The more we can achieve immunity through vaccination, the less people will be at risk infection and implications of Long Covid.

Many people are not confident about further easing of society-level restrictions

Recent UK polls continue to suggest restrictions to prevent spread remain popular amongst the majority of people until the pandemic is under control worldwide, but not permanently.¹ Most support is for face coverings in crowded places; self-isolation and proof of vaccination following foreign travel. Eight out of 10 people in the UK believe we will learn to live with the virus in the future but are less sure about the short-term, with 83% saying they will not holiday abroad this year and 64% saying they do not think we will be back to 'normal' by Christmas 2021.²

The WHO recommends that during a pandemic when not in lockdown that the population should continue with social distancing, face coverings, avoiding crowded places and to be in well ventilated spaces. The public response from these polls give hope that many people will continue to be cautious and responsible as legal restrictions are removed. Our job will be to keep people as informed as possible, whether the news is positive or challenging.

What about the impact on health and social care?

There was a significant increase in hospitalisations during July, but we are starting to see some hopeful signs of slowing. Following a very busy period in the primary care COVID-19 Hub we are also starting to see activity reducing. That said, all of health and social care is still operating at much higher levels of COVID-related demand now, than in the early spring.

When we think about safety in health and care environments, many of our health and social care services are likely to take a cautious approach to lifting restrictions due to the vulnerability of people whom we look after.

¹ <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/majority-britons-support-extending-certain-covid-19-restrictions-not-forever>

² <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/eight-ten-think-britain-will-learn-live-coronavirus-future>

Winter type pressures seem to be enduring

Our hospitals operate typically with very little headroom, so the 20% reduction of beds due to infection control has added significant pressure right across the whole system. Alongside this, demand for unscheduled and emergency care has been increasing in recent months, limiting our capacity for elective/planned care. All of this is occurring during the summer months, when workforce is typically lower due to annual leave and where COVID-19 related absence has further added to the pressure. It has been and continues to be a very tough time for staff where 60% of respondents to the We Care Pulse survey (total survey respondents =1205) reported being often or always too tired after work to enjoy things they like to do at home.

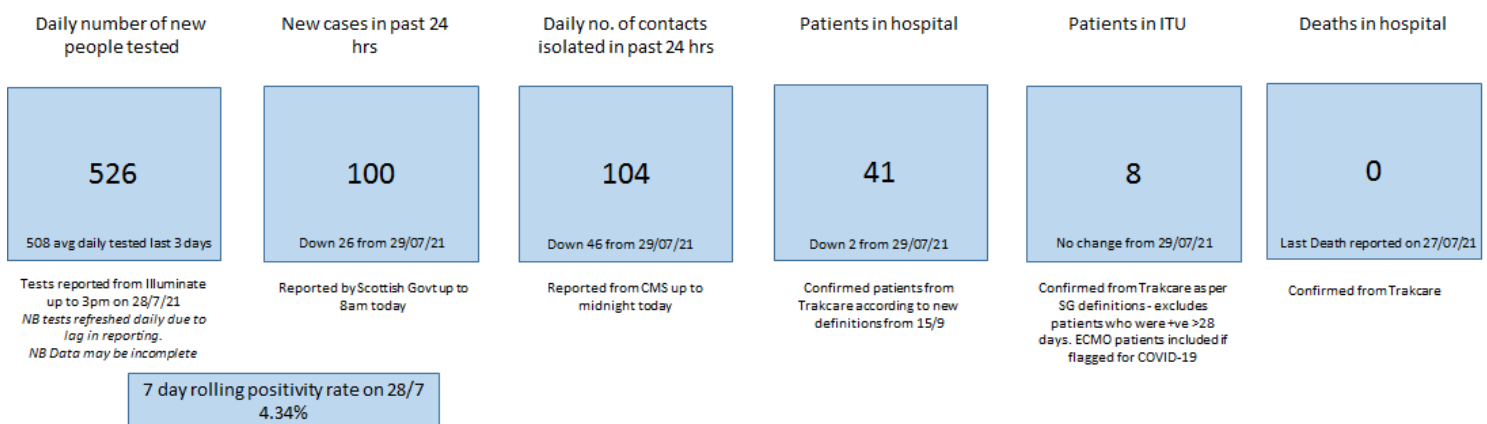
Meeting healthcare needs beyond COVID-19

We know all too well we have a growing backlog of care which will take many years to address. This is distressing for patients, upsetting for staff, and has wider implications beyond health. We are not alone in this and some of the solutions will be out of our control. With a positive perspective, this is an opportunity to look at the big picture of health and social care. Many of the changes we wished to make over a decade have been condensed into the last year and there is great potential to adopt even more innovative approaches to treatments. [The current consultation to inform the Grampian Strategic Plan is a chance to say what you think could be different beyond the immediate pressures.](#)

Final thoughts

On a sombre note: we are in a complex and unstable situation with low certainty about what the coming weeks will hold. However, we can and should be hopeful – we have vaccinations; our uptake is increasing; people are responsible, and we will prevail.

Grampian data Here is the local update for today, including the 7-day rolling positivity rate. As a reminder, this rate is arrived at by dividing the number of positive tests in the past 7 days by the number of tests carried out in the past 7 days. Repeat tests are included in both categories. The figure for the “daily number of new people tested” is only for the number of tests for people who have not been tested previously.



A national update is available on the [Public Health Scotland daily dashboard](#).

Readiness to remobilise Following the Chief Executive’s message in Monday’s Staff Brief, we wanted to share a little on what has been done to support teams since we received your readiness to remobilise returns. Teams were asked to share what they needed and what would help address the challenges they are facing. As a result, an Information & Navigation Hub has been established, as part of the wider support system, to take actions forward. Attached to the email used to send out this brief is more information about what teams shared and details on how to contact the hub. We will share more about the work underway in the Daily Brief as it progresses.

PPE 3 week look ahead:

PPE Summary - Predicted Equipment Remaining at the end of each week

	FFP3 Mask	type IIR mask	Covid Gowns	Theatre Gowns	Visors + Goggles	Aprons	Gloves
July 26, 2021	222,333	177,125	6,964	4,742	32,498	989,306	2,654,703
August 2, 2021	223,520	175,101	6,928	5,084	32,677	989,306	2,654,703
August 9, 2021	224,708	173,076	6,892	5,426	32,855	989,306	2,654,703
August 16, 2021	225,896	171,052	6,856	5,768	33,034	989,306	2,654,703

■ Stock < 0 ■ Stock <= 2 Days ■ Stock <= 5 Days ■ Stock > 5 Days

Tune of the day We're rounding off our journey through the weird and wonderful world of cover versions with a request from Gareth Evans. [He particularly wanted some Metallica, so we give their version of Whiskey in the Jar.](#) We've been deluged with suggestions on this topic – more than we could ever include – so we also present a [Spotify playlist of all these tunes](#). You shouldn't (I hope) need a Spotify account to be able to play this.

Finally, we hope you will allow us a personal indulgence. Dr Derek Cox has provided the daily brief team with the benefit of his clinical knowledge throughout the last 16 months. He has also been a key player in the development and ongoing operation of the contact tracing team. Not bad for someone who only joined the organisation as a short-term locum at the start of 2020! He is now stepping back from many of his duties and taking a well-deserved break. There is only one song we could choose for him – [Whatta Man, by Salt 'n' Pepa & En Vogue](#).

Have a great weekend – we'll be back on Monday.

Get in touch! If you've got a question, an item to share with people working in health & social care, or just want to suggest a tune of the day, we want to hear from you! Drop us a line via gram.communications@nhs.scot.