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Welcome to the latest edition of our NHS Grampian newsletter, which aims to keep you informed through regular updates and articles of interest regarding the health and care of the Grampian population.

### Covid-19 vaccination update

Anyone who received their COVID-19 vaccinations in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Guernsey, Jersey, Isle of Man, or the Republic of Ireland, can now have the information added to their vaccination record in Scotland. Information on the procedure can be found [here](#)

### Flu vaccination update

Flu immunisations are already underway in primary and secondary schools for pupils and staff. Pre-school immunisations are taking place in Aberdeen City and will shortly commence in Aberdeenshire and Moray. The adult programme has also been launched and everyone who meets the criteria for a flu vaccine is expected to receive it by mid-December.

People over 70 years will have been receiving their invitations by post in the last fortnight. The portal for booking your appointment if you are between 50-69 years is expected to open at the end of October/beginning of

November. Remember GPs are not involved so please remind your family, friends, and neighbours that they should not contact their GP about their flu jab, as they will not be able to assist them.

All information on flu vaccination can be accessed [here](#)

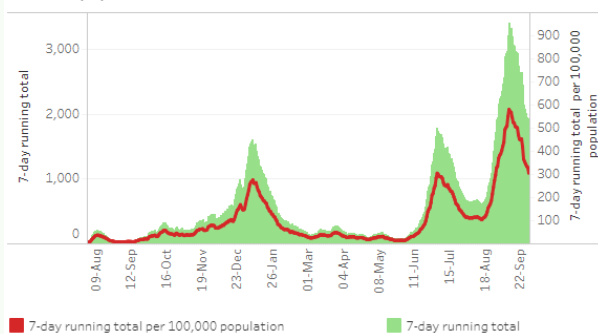
### Public Health Update (as at 8.10.21)

#### National position – signs of a plateau?

The Scotland rate on 7 October was 307.29 per 100,000 compared to 362.51 in the previous week. This is a continued trend in the right direction although the rate of reduction has slowed. Daily hospital occupancy is reducing slowly although remains more than a third higher than at the beginning of September.

#### COVID in Grampian – signs of an increase

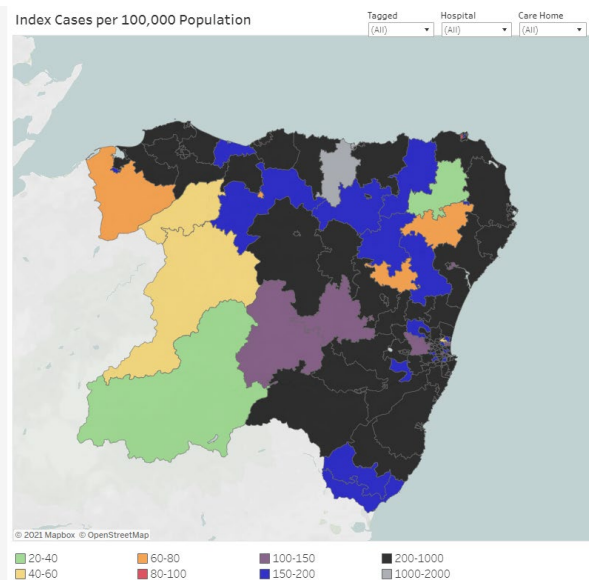
Grampian: Number of Positive Cases - Running 7 Day Total and Rate per 100,000 population



You can see the change in case numbers in Grampian over the past week in the chart above, with an increase of 16% and rates of 342.2 per 100,000 which is now higher than the Scottish average. Whilst there has been little change in Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray are both increasing by 19% and 60% respectively.

## What is driving this increase in cases?

Over the past week, we are still seeing widespread high rates of transmission across many parts of Grampian.



An increasing proportion of cases in Aberdeenshire and Moray are in school age children.

The positivity rate amongst school age children is high at around 20%, compared to 7-8% overall.



We continue to work closely with schools to support safe environments and infection prevention and control. And of course, we are providing drop-in sessions and support for parents and young people to make an informed choice about vaccination – so far, 31% of our 12-15 year olds have now had the recommended one dose. An important thing to remember is that school age children will be mixing more outside of school too, so the precautions are needed, whatever the setting.

## Living with COVID - help needed from everyone to reduce spread of the virus

The rate of transmission in Scotland is between 0.7 and 1.0 with growth between -5% and -1%. The ONS infection survey estimates 1 in 60 people are infected. These measures show we are still in a fragile situation, albeit recent signs of change at national level give some cause for optimism.

The recent increase in Grampian set against the national trends highlight the need for a fast outbreak response to reduce risks of resurgence. Supporting cases in the community to isolate, identifying contacts and enabling them to test and isolate as appropriate remains important.

Contact tracing remains a key part of our public health response and self-completion of the on-line contact tracing form is important to identify close contacts of a positive case and reduce the risk of onward transmission. However only 29% of all cases in Grampian during August and September were completed using the form. We know that some people find the form complicated and work is underway nationally to improve this. However, in the meantime we would ask you to do your best to complete the form as we cannot detect clusters of cases or outbreaks without this data.

## Significant pressure across the health and care system continues

You would have to have been without Wi-Fi, radio, TV and newspapers to have missed news about the growing pressures in health and social care. In Grampian, at the time of writing this report (8/10), 97.3% of available beds within Aberdeen Royal Infirmary were occupied, with ICU at maximum capacity.

Consultations and contacts for respiratory infections also continue to increase – with related calls to NHS24 being almost double the daily average for this time of year.

Whilst we work to increase capacity, the best thing that we can all do is to prevent

ourselves from becoming sick with winter viruses and COVID. Please stay away from vulnerable people if you are sick or if you think you may have been exposed to the virus.

### Feature – Robot Surgery



Surgeons at NHS Grampian have recently undertaken their 100<sup>th</sup> orthopaedic surgery using a state-of-the-art robot – just three months after it was installed.

Earlier this year, surgeons at Woodend Hospital, in Aberdeen, became the first as a territorial board in Scotland to undertake a robotic hip replacement. The technology is also used for other orthopaedic operations, including knee replacements.

The Stryker Mako Robot has greatly improved joint replacement accuracy and will continue to benefit the patients requiring hip and knee replacements in the north-east of Scotland.

Although dubbed “robot surgery” the surgeon is still very much carrying out the operation – the robot simply allows surgeons to be more precise, improving overall capacity and patient experience.

For hip replacement patients the robot allows more accurate implant positioning - which minimises muscle damage, allowing quicker recovery.

Knee replacement patients have less post-operative pain, and quicker recovery times. That in turn creates extra capacity to allow us

to operate on more patients, freeing up beds as patients go home more quickly.

Woodend Hospital has one of the shortest length of stays for patients in the country for knee and hip patients and it is hoped this technology will improve this further.

There are six surgeons trained to use the orthopaedic robot so far, with more training planned in the near future – so that number will continue to increase and boost capacity.

### Latest messages and useful links

#### BBC filming

Aberdeen Royal infirmary and Aberdeenshire HSCP recently supported filming by BBC Reporting Scotland to highlight pressure across services. If you missed these features, they are available to watch via YouTube (click the links below):

[BBC in ARI \(first broadcast Wednesday 29 September\)](#)

[BBC in Aberdeenshire \(first broadcast Thursday 30 September\)](#)

#### Travel Vaccinations

Travel vaccinations are now available at community pharmacies. As travel restrictions continue to relax, there’s a change to the way vaccines for overseas travel are offered. Instead of making an appointment with your GP, you are now able to arrange travel vaccinations at one of 35 community pharmacies across the Grampian as part of the wider national programme. Further details are available [here](#)

#### Useful links:

- <https://www.covidvaxgrampian.com/>
- <https://www.nhsgrampian.org/covid-19/covid-19-public-information/subpages/covid-19-community-testing/>
- Information and updates can also be found in the NHS Grampian Daily Brief [click here](#)