

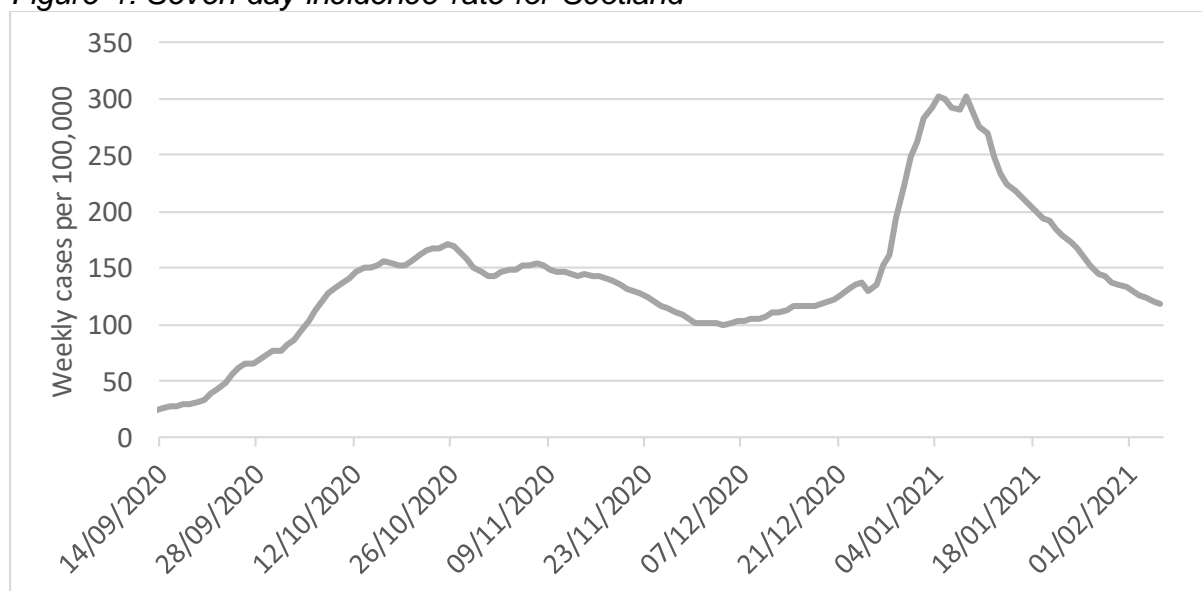
STATE OF THE EPIDEMIC IN SCOTLAND, 12TH FEBRUARY 2021

This report summarises the data up to and including the 11th February 2021 on COVID-19 in Scotland.

There are further encouraging indications this week that the current stay at home measures are reducing the level of SARS-CoV-2 in Scotland. Estimates for R remain below 1, and total infections and case numbers have continued to decline. Not everyone who has the virus will be tested as many people do not realise they have COVID or have mild symptoms and do not come forward. Latest modelled estimates suggest there are currently between 1,400 and 3,200 people infected each day¹. This means that as of 10th February there were between 26 and 58 new daily infections per 100,000 people. An average of 822 cases were reported per day in the 7 days to 11th February. This has decreased by around 16% from the previous week to 4th February². This number is now less than half of the peak of 2,323 average daily cases reported in the week to 7th January.

Our current position is 112 weekly cases per 100,000³ in the week to 8th February⁴. This compares to 302 weekly cases per 100,000 on 8th January and 99 weekly cases per 100,000 on 4th December (see Figure 1). While incident rates continue to decline, the rate of decline is slowing. Test positivity has decreased since new stay at home measures were introduced, and is now at 5.6% on average over the past week (to 8th February)³. This remains above the WHO benchmark published last year which suggests a positive rate of less than 5% is one indicator that the epidemic is under control in a country.

Figure 1: Seven day incidence rate for Scotland



¹ Scottish Government:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/?term=modelling&cat=filter&topics=Coronavirus%20in%20Scotland&publicationTypes=research-and-analysis&page=1>

² Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-data-for-scotland/>

³ The incidence rate of diagnosed infection is defined as the number of newly reported, laboratory confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 per 100,000 population.

⁴ Public Health Scotland Covid dashboard: https://public.tableau.com/profile/phs.covid.19#!vizhome/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview

In a UK context, the level of infection in Scotland (0.67% people currently testing positive for Covid on 31 Jan -06 Feb) is below England (1.28%), Wales (1.16%) and Northern Ireland (1.33%)⁵. The rate of confirmed cases is lower in Scotland than other nations (except Wales), but so is the rate of testing⁶. Average daily deaths in Scotland (0.74 per 100,000 in the week to 10th February) are above Northern Ireland (0.51 per 100,000), but lower than in England (1.26 per 100,000) and Wales (0.91 per 100,000).

Falkirk and Clackmannanshire are currently the only two Local Authorities recording over 200 weekly cases per 100,000³. Clackmannanshire has seen a 36% increase in weekly cases (from 161 to 219) per 100,000 over 1-8 February, while Falkirk has seen a 14% increase in weekly cases (from 195 to 222) per 100,000 population. North Lanarkshire currently has the highest positivity rate in Scotland, which currently sits at 9.0% as of 8th February. Other notable Local Authorities with an increase in cases per 100,000 over 1-8 February were Argyll and Bute (+30%), East Lothian (+29%), and Stirling (+18%). Case rates have fallen in most other parts of Scotland⁴. Over the past week the incidence rate per 100,000 has remained below 10 for the Northern Isles .

The Scottish Contact Survey measures times and settings that people mix where they could potentially spread Covid. From this survey we can say that interactions between age groups decreased from the level observed before the festive period⁷. The Stay at Home regulations that came into effect on 5 January are having an impact on behaviour, and there is high level of compliance with the regulations. This is supported by evidence on self-reported compliance with the restrictions: on 9-11 Feb, 80% of people reported 'complete' or 'almost complete' compliance, and this number has been consistently high since the beginning of the year.⁸

The latest R value for Scotland (published on 11th February) has remained the same as the previous week and was between 0.7 and 0.9 (Figure 2), with a growth rate of between -5% and -2%⁹. This together with evidence on contacts suggests that we're likely to see total infections and confirmed cases fall further.

⁵ Office for National Statistics:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurvey/pilot/previousReleases>

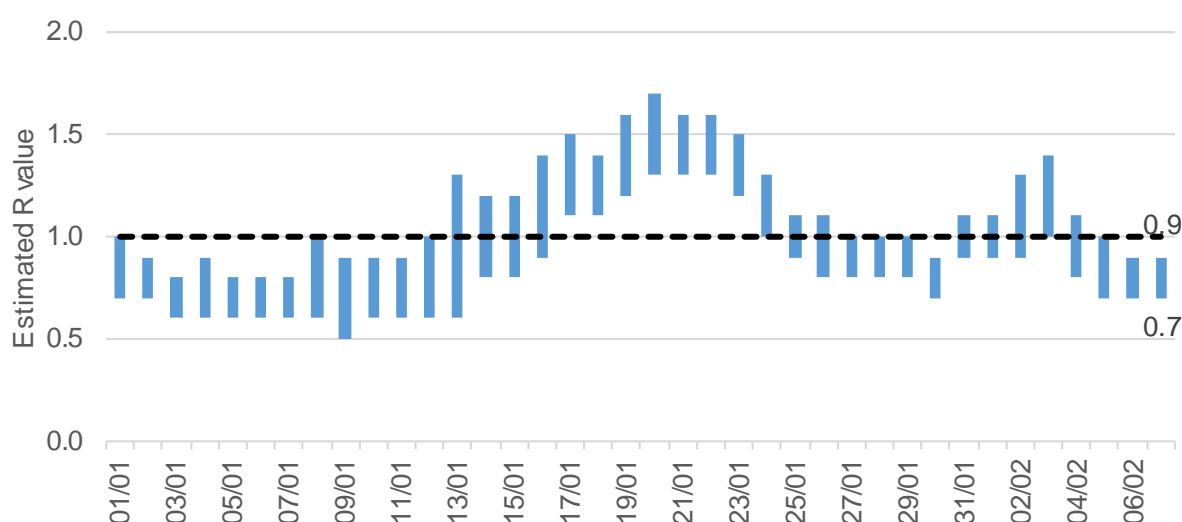
⁶ <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/testing>

⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-modelling-epidemic-issue-no-37/>

⁸ Results are taken from questions run on behalf of Scottish Government on the YouGov online omnibus survey. The sample is demographically and geographically representative of adults 18+ across Scotland, with c.1000 responses each week. Total sample size on 9-11 February was 1016 adults. 'Complete' or 'almost complete' compliance refers to respondents who rated themselves 6 or 7 on a scale of 0-7 for the question: Thinking about ALL of the guidance from the Scottish Government on what to do and what not to do during the Coronavirus pandemic (including distancing, protection measures and all restrictions)...On a scale of 1-7, where 1 is 'Not at all' and 7 is 'Completely', to what extent do you feel you are following the regulations and guidance?

⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-modelling-epidemic-issue-no-38/>

Figure 2: R in Scotland over time



Variant B.1.1.7 or VOC-202012/01 has been increasing its share of confirmed cases since it was first detected in Scotland in mid-December. From 7 - 8 February 79% of Scotland's cases tested via the UK Government laboratories had a profile consistent with the new variant of Covid-19, compared with 73% from 31 Jan - 1 Feb¹⁰.

This new variant of Covid is more transmissible, in a recent Public Health England technical briefing this increase is considered to be between 10% and 70% where sufficient sequencing data is available. The age and sex distribution of VOC 202012/01 is similar to other variants. The proportion of named contacts of a variant case that were infected is about 13% compared to 10% of named contacts with a non-variant case¹¹.

There is a realistic possibility that infection with VOC 202012/01 is associated with an increased risk of death compared to infection with non-VOC viruses¹². Preliminary results published in the last weeks 'Modelling the epidemic in Scotland' suggests there may be a 63% (range 40%-80%, 95% confidence interval) increase in hospitalisations with the new variant, and a 37% (2%-84%, 95% confidence interval) increase in deaths⁷. This analysis may change as more data becomes available in the coming weeks.

Other variants of concern are being monitored, up to 10 February, there have been 5 confirmed cases and 1 probable case detected of the Variant VOC-202012/02 (first seen in South Africa), and 1 case of Variant VUI-202010/01 (first seen in Brazil)¹³. There is some concern, mainly based on laboratory analysis that these variants may partially escape immunity, from both natural infection and from vaccines currently being deployed, and we are monitoring the evidence on this¹⁴.

¹⁰ Public Health Scotland: <https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/9-september-2020/dashboard/>

¹¹ [Investigation of novel SARS-CoV-2 variant - Variant of Concern 202012/01 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544444/investigation-of-novel-sars-cov-2-variant-variant-of-concern-202012-01.pdf)

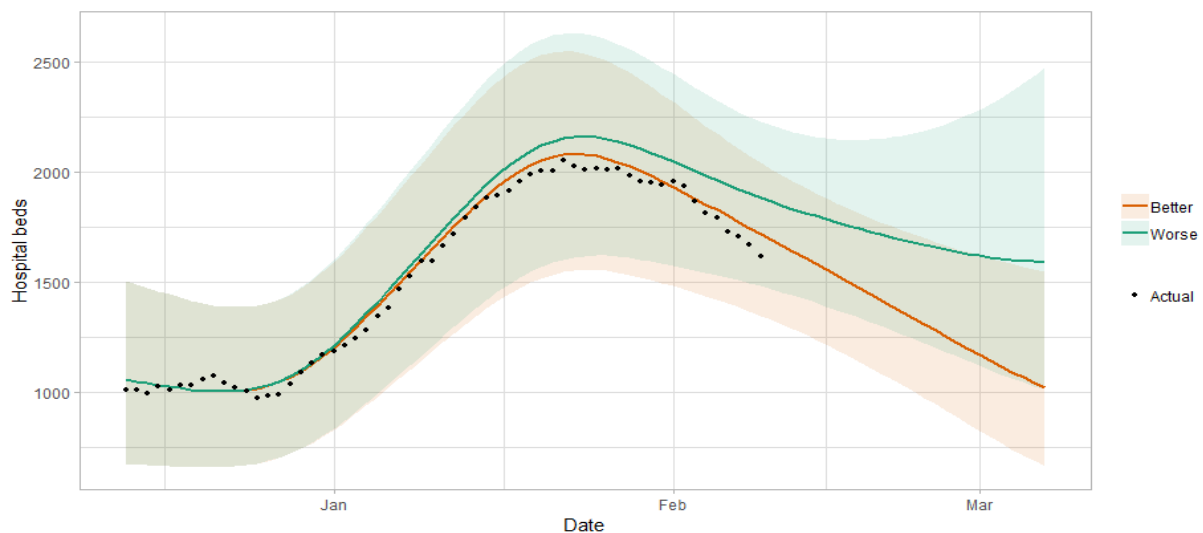
¹² [NERVTAG paper on COVID-19 variant of concern B.1.1.7 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544444/nervtag-paper-on-covid-19-variant-of-concern-b.1.1.7.pdf)

¹³ [Variants: distribution of cases data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544444/variants-distribution-of-cases-data.pdf)

¹⁴ [Brief note on SARS-CoV-2 variants \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544444/brief-note-on-sars-cov-2-variants.pdf)

The number of people in hospital with confirmed Covid for less than 28 days is now declining. After peaking at 2,053 on 22nd January, this figure has decreased and as of 11th February there were 1,499 patients in hospital with COVID-19. In addition, there was a fall in daily hospital admissions for people with Covid from a peak of 240 on 11th January to 96 on 5th February¹⁵. At a national level the number of daily new infections are projected to continue falling in the next two weeks as result of lockdown restrictions. Hospital bed and ICU occupancy are also projected to fall over the next two weeks in advance of any partial schools re-opening effect¹.

Figure 3: Medium term projections of modelled hospital bed demand¹⁶, from Scottish Government modelling¹.



There were 374 deaths registered where Covid was mentioned on the death certificate in the week to 7th February. This is a 16% decrease on the week before (444 deaths), and 44% lower than the peak in April (662 deaths)¹⁷.

The proportion of people surveyed who said they would be likely to be vaccinated for COVID-19 remains high. 18% of all respondents have already been vaccinated and a further 64% report they are likely to be vaccinated when a vaccine becomes available to them, giving 82% in total who say they have been vaccinated or are likely to be. People aged 65+ are more likely to report themselves as having been vaccinated or likely to receive the vaccine when it becomes available (95% giving these responses compared with 72% among those aged 18-44¹⁸).

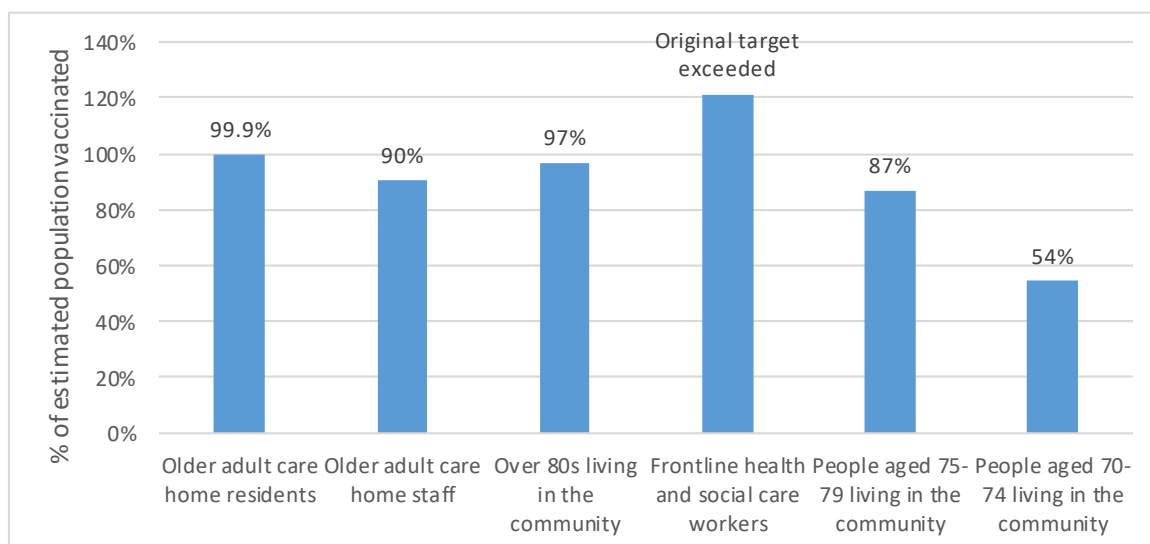
¹⁵ Public Health Scotland weekly trends dashboard: <https://beta.isdscotland.org/find-publications-and-data/population-health/covid-19/covid-19-statistical-report/27-january-2021/dashboard/>

¹⁶ The logistical model developed by Scottish Government to assess implications for health care demand has been adapted to produce a medium-term prediction of infections. There are two projections which take account of vaccine roll-out (better and worse).

¹⁷ National Records of Scotland: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/general-publications/weekly-and-monthly-data-on-births-and-deaths/deaths-involving-coronavirus-covid-19-in-scotland>

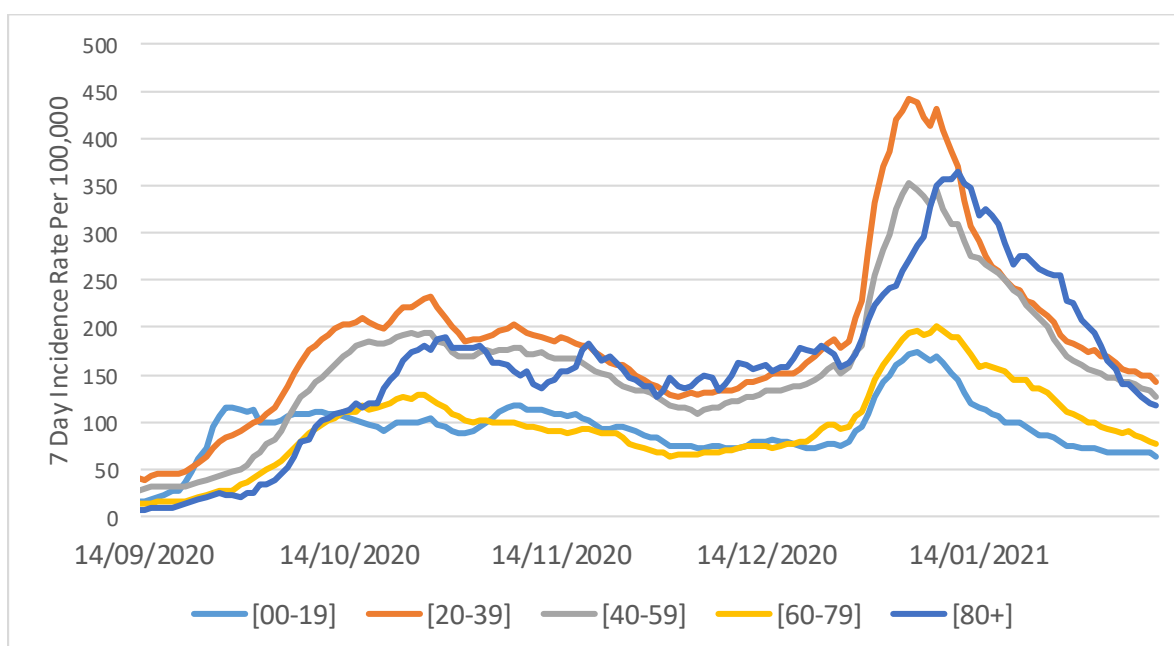
¹⁸ Total sample size on 9-11 February was 1016 adults. 'Likely' to be vaccinated refers to respondents who rated themselves 8 to 10 on a scale of 0-10 for the question: How likely or unlikely are you to be vaccinated for COVID-19 when a vaccine becomes available to you? (Please select a number between 0 and 10, where 0 means 'extremely unlikely' and 10 means 'extremely likely')

Figure 4: Estimated % of priority groups vaccinated to 11th February 2021



The first vaccines were administered on Tuesday 8th of December and 1,048,747 had received their first dose by 11th February 2021, a 51% increase from the 4th February¹⁹. By the 11th of February 99.9% of residents in older adult care homes had received their first vaccination along with 90% of older adult care home staff. 97% of individuals aged 80 or over living in the community had received their first vaccination (Figure 4). It is anticipated that vaccination will reduce infection levels in the most vulnerable in the coming weeks and months. While case numbers have declined in all age groups over the past week the most significant of these declines is in the over 80s (Figure 5) where incidence rates have decreased by over 30%.

Figure 5: Seven day incidence rate³ in Scotland by Age Band by specimen date²⁰



¹⁹ Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-trends-in-daily-data/>

²⁰ Source: Public Health Scotland