

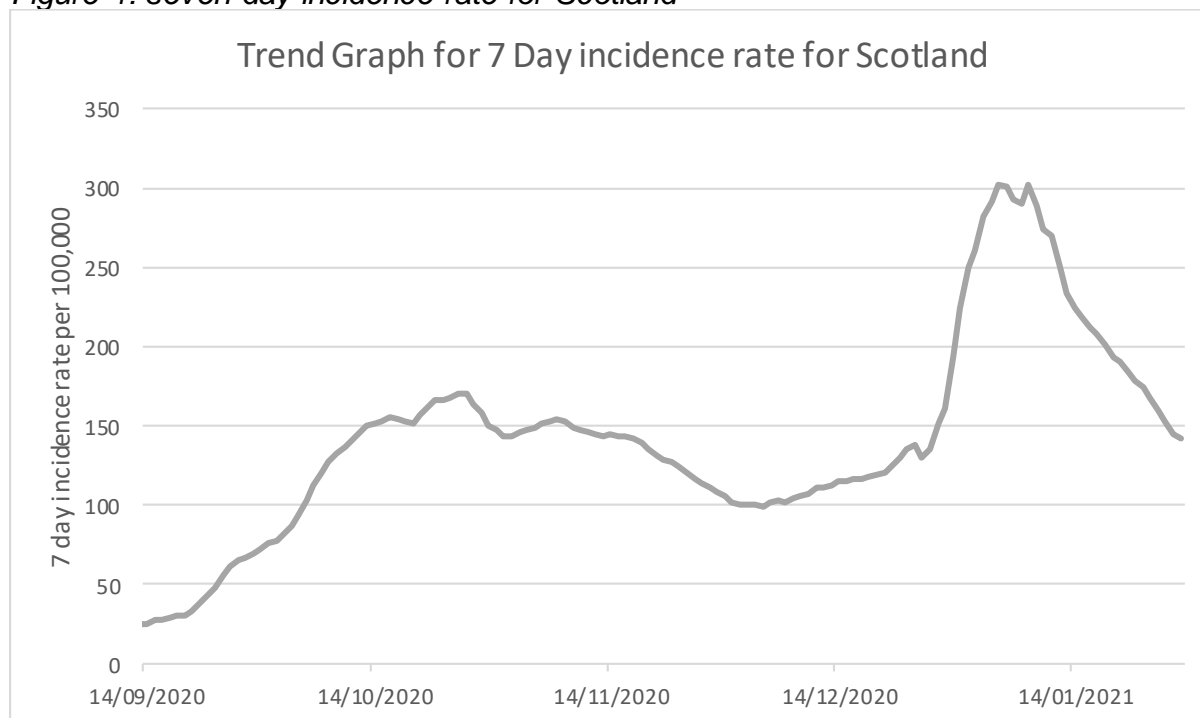
## STATE OF THE EPIDEMIC IN SCOTLAND, 5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021

This report summarises the data up to and including the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 on COVID-19 in Scotland.

There are further positive indications this week that the current stay at home measures are reducing the level of SARS-CoV-2 in Scotland. Estimates for R are below 1, total infections and case numbers have all 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 1,700 and 3,900 people infected each day<sup>1</sup>. An average of 984 daily positive cases were reported in the 7 days to 4<sup>th</sup> February around a 20% reduction in the last week<sup>2</sup>. This number is now less than half the peak of 2,323 average daily cases in the week to 7<sup>th</sup> January.

Our current weekly incidence rate is 128 cases per 100,000 in the week to 1<sup>st</sup> February<sup>3</sup>. This compares to 302 weekly cases per 100,000 on 8<sup>th</sup> January and 99 weekly cases per 100,000 on 4<sup>th</sup> December. Test positivity has also declined since new stay at home measures were introduced and is at 6.4% on average over the past week. 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



<sup>1</sup> Scottish Government:

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Public Health Scotland Covid dashboard: [https://public.tableau.com/profile/phs.covid.19#/vizhome/COVID-19DailyDashboard\\_15960160643010/Overview](https://public.tableau.com/profile/phs.covid.19#/vizhome/COVID-19DailyDashboard_15960160643010/Overview)

In a UK context, the level of infection in Scotland (0.88% people currently testing positive for Covid on 24-30<sup>th</sup> Jan) is below England (1.55%), Wales (1.40%) and Northern Ireland (1.56%)<sup>4</sup>. The rate of confirmed cases is lower in Scotland than other nations, but so is the rate of testing<sup>5</sup>. Weekly deaths in Scotland (1.0 per 100,000 in the week to 3<sup>rd</sup> February) are in line with Wales (1.0 per 100,000), lower than England (1.7 per 100,000), but above Northern Ireland (0.8)<sup>6</sup>.

After a notable 28% decrease in confirmed cases between 25<sup>th</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> February, North Lanarkshire still has the highest case rate, with 201 new cases being reported per 100,000 in the past week. It also has the highest positivity rate of 10.3% in Scotland as of 1 February. Local Authorities that saw an increase in cases per 100,000 over 25 January – 1 February were Argyll and Bute (+11%), East Lothian (+4%), East Renfrewshire (+5%), Falkirk (+15%), Na h-Eileanan Siar (+127%), Stirling (+1%) and West Lothian (+15%). Cases have fallen in all other parts of Scotland<sup>3</sup>. Over the past week the incidence rate per 100,000 has declined to below 10 for the Northern Islands.

The Scottish Contact Survey measures times and settings that people mix where they could potentially spread Covid<sup>1</sup>. The survey asks about situations where people may transmit Covid and how many people they met in those places. The survey is completed in alternating weeks by two different panels. For the most recent survey (21-27<sup>th</sup> Jan) average contacts in the workplace and school settings have both doubled compared to two weeks earlier. The same number of people are visiting the workplace compared to two weeks ago but they are having more contacts when they do. Contacts within the home setting have remained at a consistent level over the last few weeks.

Overall, average contacts remain at a consistent level across panels since the week of 14-20<sup>th</sup> January (3.1 average contacts). Interactions between age groups have decreased from the level observed before the festive period (17 – 23 December)<sup>1</sup>. 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 2-4 Feb, 83% of people reported 'complete' or 'almost complete' compliance, and this number has increased since before Christmas.<sup>7</sup>

The latest R value for Scotland (published on 4<sup>th</sup> February) was between 0.7 and 0.9 with a growth rate between -5% and -2%<sup>8</sup>. This, together with evidence on contacts (average of 3.1) suggests that we're likely to see total infections and confirmed cases

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<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveys/pilot/previousReleases>

<sup>5</sup> <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/testing>

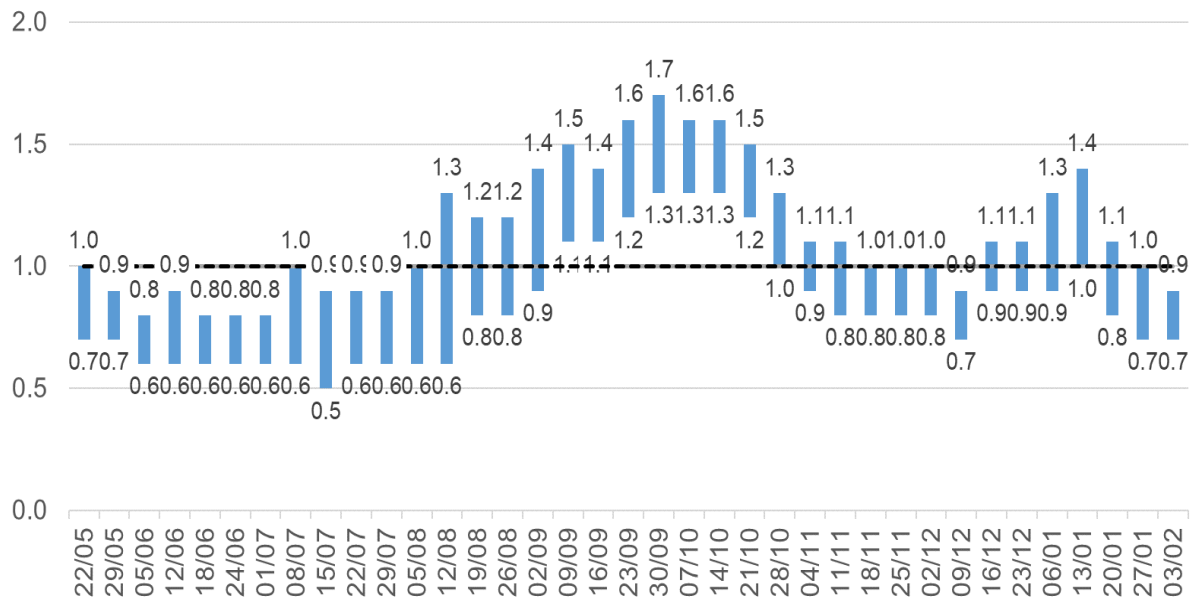
<sup>6</sup> UK Government Coronavirus in the UK dashboard: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/deaths>

<sup>7</sup> 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 2-4 February was 1008 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?

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-modelling-epidemic-issue-no-37/>

fall further. This low level of contact prevents Covid transmission that will show up in confirmed cases over the next week.

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. On 31 January to 01 February 73% of Scotland’s cases tested via the UK Government laboratories had a profile consistent with the new variant of Covid-19, compared with 67% on 24/25<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>9</sup>. There remains significant variation in the prevalence of this variant across health board areas which means that when travel is permitted that there is likely to be a significant increase in new cases as the variant becomes dominant across the rest of Scotland.

This new variant of Covid is more transmissible, this increase is considered to be between 10% and 70% where sufficient sequencing data is available. Using the S Gene Target Failure proxy to give a more comprehensive overview the increase is consistently around 30% to 50%<sup>10</sup>. Evidence on the increased transmissibility of this variant is continually reviewed. 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 viruses<sup>11</sup>.

Preliminary results published in the latest ‘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 deaths<sup>8</sup>. This analysis may change as more data becomes available in the coming weeks. The age and sex distribution of VOC 202012/01 is similar to other variants. The secondary attack rate for this new variant are estimated from contact tracing information to be higher than for other circulating lineages<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Public Health Scotland: [COVID-19 statistical report 3 February 2021 - Data & intelligence from PHS \(isdscotland.org\)](https://www.isdscotland.org/COVID-19-statistical-report-3-February-2021)

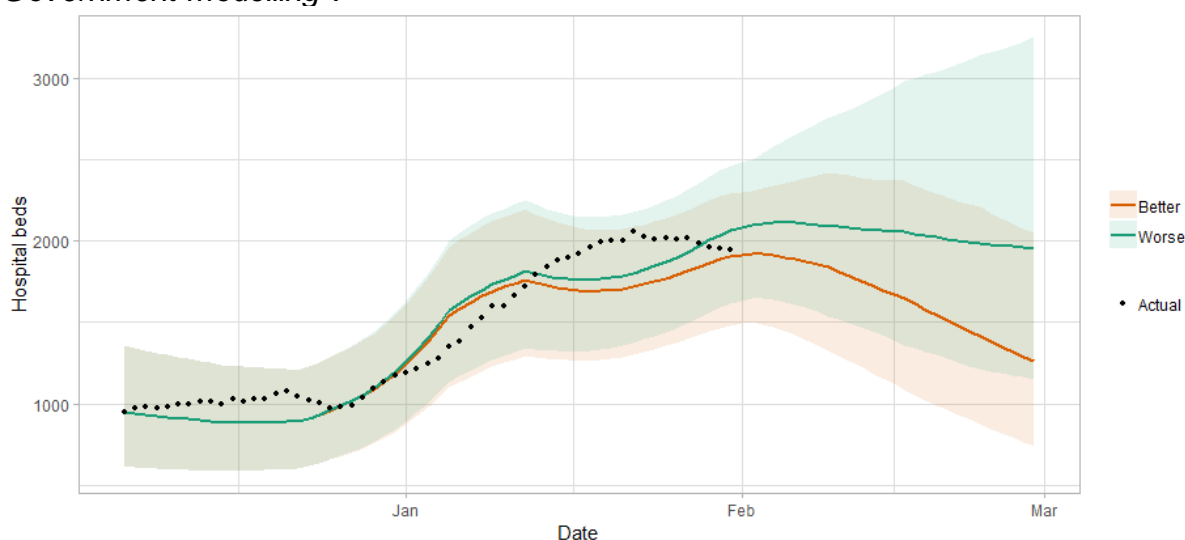
<sup>10</sup> [Investigation of novel SARS-CoV-2 variant: Variant of Concern 202012/01 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97414/investigation-of-novel-sars-cov-2-variant-variant-of-concern-202012-01)

<sup>11</sup> [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/97414/nervtag-paper-on-covid-19-variant-of-concern-b.1.1.7)

Other variants of concern are being monitored, up to 1 February, there have been 4 confirmed cases and 1 probable case detected of the Variant VOC-202012/02 (first seen in South Africa) and no cases on Variant VUI-202101/01 or Variant VOC-202101/02 (both first seen in Brazil)<sup>12</sup>. 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 this<sup>13</sup>.

The number of people in hospital with confirmed Covid for less than 28 days is beginning to decline slightly. The 20th January was the first day with over 2,000 people in hospital with confirmed Covid and this figure reduced back to below 2,000 on 28th January. As of 4th February there were 1,812 patients in hospital with COVID-19. In addition, there was a fall in daily hospital admissions for people with Covid from a peak of 234 on 11th January to 112 on 29th January<sup>14</sup>. Modelling suggests that the number of people in hospital for Covid is likely to continue to reduce slowly over the next few weeks<sup>1</sup>.

Figure 3 : Medium term projections of modelled hospital bed demand<sup>15</sup>, from Scottish Government modelling<sup>1</sup>.



There were 440 deaths registered where Covid was mentioned on the death certificate in the week to 31st January. This is a 3% decrease on the week before (452 deaths), and 66% lower than the peak in April (662 deaths)<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> [Variants: distribution of cases data - GOV.UK \(w www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/variants-distribution-of-cases-data)

<sup>13</sup> [Brief note on SARS-CoV-2 variants \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91231/brief-note-on-sars-cov-2-variants.pdf)

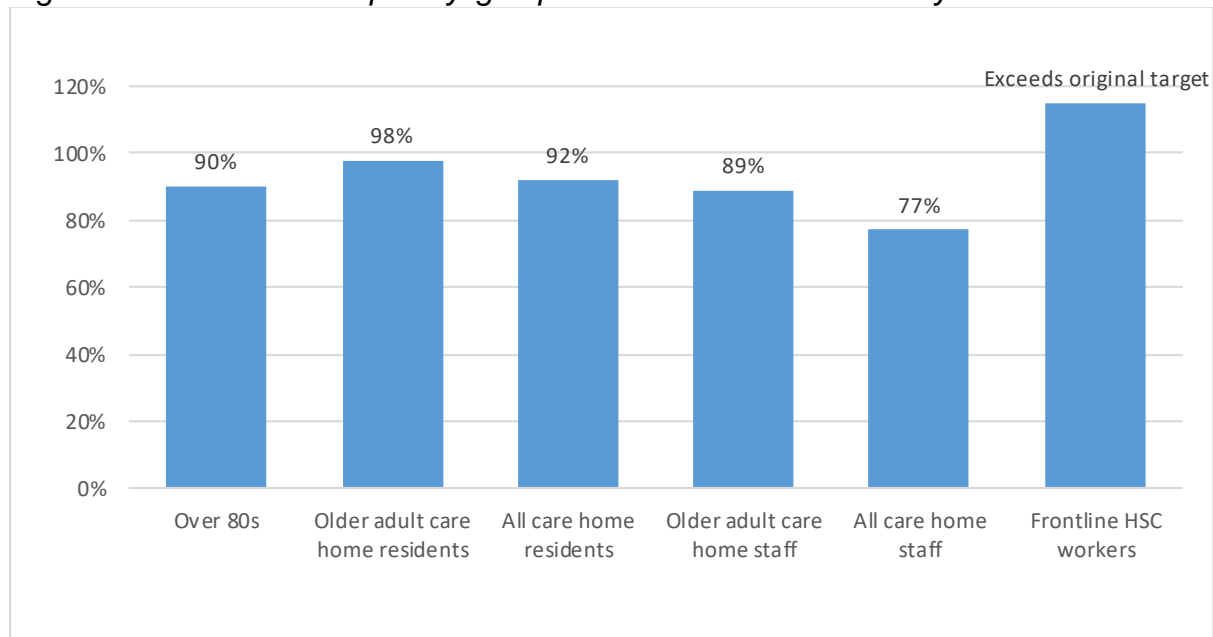
<sup>14</sup> Public Health Scotland weekly trends dashboard: [Dashboard - Data & intelligence from PHS \(isdscotland.org\)](https://dashboards.phs.scot.nhs.uk/)

<sup>15</sup> 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).

<sup>16</sup> 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>

The proportion of people surveyed who said they would be likely to be vaccinated for COVID-19 remains high. Just over four fifths (83%) reporting they are likely to be vaccinated when a vaccine becomes available to them. People aged 65+ are the age group most likely to be vaccinated (93% saying they are likely to be vaccinated compared with 75% among those aged 18-44).<sup>17</sup>

Figure 4: Estimated % of priority groups vaccinated to 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021



The first vaccines were administered on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> of December and 694,347 had received their first dose by 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021, a 41% increase from the 28<sup>th</sup> January<sup>18</sup>. By the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 98% of residents in older adult care homes had received their first vaccination along with 88% of older adult care home staff. As of the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 90% of individuals aged 80 or over living in the community had received their first vaccination. The initial target of vaccinating 230,000 health and social care staff was exceeded on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January. It is anticipated that vaccination will reduce infection levels in the most vulnerable in the coming weeks and months.

<sup>17</sup> Total sample size on 2-4 February was 1008 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')

<sup>18</sup> Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-trends-in-daily-data/>