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THIS PAPER IS FOR DECISION

SC(20)151

RESTRICTED HANDLING

SCOTTISH CABINET

COVID-19: WEEKLY REVIEW OF PROTECTION LEVELS

**PAPER BY THE DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER AND
CABINET SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

Purpose

1. Cabinet is invited to consider this paper and its annexes to inform discussion and decisions on the application of protection levels from 18 December, and on the approach to be taken over the Christmas and New Year period.

Timing

2. This paper will be considered at Cabinet on Tuesday 15 December, prior to announcement of decisions later that day.

Background

3. *Scotland's Strategic Framework*, published on Friday 23 October, affirmed our strategic intent to work determinedly, energetically, and collaboratively to suppress the virus to the lowest possible level and keep it there, while we strive to return to a more normal life for as many people as possible. The levels-based approach to protective measures set out there applies justified, necessary and proportionate restrictions across Scotland to achieve that strategic intent.

4. The initial allocation of local authority areas to levels was announced on Thursday 29 October. This is the sixth review of levels since then.

National trends in key indicators

5. The measures which were put into force on 9 October, and subsequently developed and applied through the *Strategic Framework*, responded to increases in key indicators of the incidence and prevalence of the virus. These indicators, and forecasts of their future values, inform decisions on the application of levels to local authority areas. The charts in **Annex A**, taken from the Public Health Scotland dashboard on 13 December, show the national trends in these key indicators. It should be remembered that these data lag the application of suppression measures by at least two weeks, and longer for hospital bed use and deaths.

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Local trends in key indicators

6. As far as the local picture is concerned, updated summary indicators and trends for each local authority area are circulated with this paper for ease of reference. A version of this document, with minor changes, will once again be published at the time the review of levels is announced.

Parameters for this review

7. As noted at Cabinet on 8 December (*SC(20)47th Conclusions refers*), it is intended that this should be the last scheduled weekly review before the Christmas period, although there will be the regular COVID update item at Cabinet on 22 December, and one more opportunity to adjust the levels. Our general aim should be for the levels established this week to remain in place until the review in the week beginning 4 January, unless a rapid and dramatic deterioration in the position in the interim requires emergency action: so the discussions in preparation for Cabinet consideration took place on the basis that levels should be sustained and sustainable for at least three weeks, taking into account the relaxation of restrictions already agreed for 23-27 December.

8. The trends in the data, and information on a new strain of the virus (covered in paragraphs 35-38 below) mean that we cannot rule out changes between 18 December and early January. If necessary, Cabinet could be asked on 22 December to consider changes to take effect from Monday 28 December, or even Friday 25 December; and preparations are being made to provide for a further decision point between Christmas and New Year. This would maintain weekly decision points. (It should be noted, however, that there will be some limitations on the availability of the full range of data.)

Engagement and decision-taking

9. The *Strategic Framework* commits us to review levels on the basis of advice from the National Incident Management Team and assessment and recommendations from our own senior advisers and lead officials against the “four harms”: the morbidity and mortality caused by the virus, and harms to wider health and care, society, and the economy. We are also committed to engagement with local authorities and other partners prior to making decisions. That process has informed the latest review and recommendations set out here.

Health protection advice

10. Against this background, the National Incident Management Team (NIMT) met on 11 and 14 December to consider the progress of each local authority area, using the indicators referred to above and shown in the accompanying paper, PHS data, and local intelligence. It observed that there was some evidence of stalling in the last week in the otherwise slow reduction in cumulative incidence or weekly percentage positivity when the data were considered across Scotland to 10 December. Management data on hospitalisation and ICU admission showed a small reduction in ICU cases but more variability in hospital cases from day to day; however, it was noted that the lag between case detection and presentation limited the scope to interpret current trend data.

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11. Looking at the indicators, trends and intelligence for each area, the NIMT's advice was that:

- ◆ **Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Falkirk** should all **move up** from Level 2 to **Level 3**, in view of recent increases in incidence and test positivity that could not be attributed solely to sporadic outbreaks and suggested community transmission;
- ◆ **City of Edinburgh** and **Midlothian** should **remain at Level 3** because of continued deterioration in the position in recent days;
- ◆ The position in **East Lothian** gave cause for concern, and might suggest a case for a move to Level 3, but it was suggested that intensified local measures might be a more effective response, and the NIMT did not recommend Level 3; and
- ◆ **All other areas should remain at their present level.**

12. However, noting the recent arrest in reductions of cumulative incidence, the expectation that movement over the period of relaxation of restrictions from 23-27 December would result in significant seeding of the virus, and concerns about a fall-off in compliance over the festive period, the NIMT also recommended that consideration should be given now to a **planned pre-emptive escalation to Level 4 nationwide on 28 December** for a period of three weeks with the intention of stopping and reversing any spike in transmission.

“Four Harms” consideration

13. Both the levels-based approach set out in *Scotland's Strategic Framework* and the content of the levels reflect consideration by the Scottish Government's chief advisers and lead officials of the “four harms” caused by the virus. In addition, at each review of levels, the same group considers the NIMT's advice, feedback from engagement with local government and businesses, and the proposed levels. The question of the social and economic harms (harms 3 and 4) caused by possible tightening of restrictions is a particularly important factor in consideration of areas where the public health advice is less clear cut.

Direct health impacts (“harm 1”)

14. The direct health impacts of the virus are considered within the NIMT's advice. The Four Harms consideration supports the application of levels as proposed above in order to continue to suppress the virus, and thus reduce and prevent the mortality and morbidity it causes. While there have been advances in treatment of serious cases, improving outcomes, and the rollout of vaccination will over time change the landscape dramatically, COVID-19 remains a novel, infectious and potentially fatal virus. It remains a serious threat to public health, and should continue to be suppressed through justified, necessary and proportionate measures to that end.

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVEBroader Health Impacts (“harm 2”)

15. Arrangements are already in place to mitigate the impact of restrictions on wider health and care, and to remobilise NHS and other care services. Two of the five key indicators considered as part of the levels review process reflect broader health impacts, in their consideration of forecast levels of hospital and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admissions, allowing assessment of the risk that NHS services become overwhelmed by rising numbers of cases of COVID-19. While that remains a concern and must continue to be kept under close review, sufficient reserve capacity is in place at this review point to mitigate the forecast impacts of the virus on harm 2.

16. The NHS indicators for beds and ICU are predicated on capacity to the end of the calendar year. Forecasts for the busiest time of the year, January and February, currently show that COVID-available capacity reduces by about 1,000 beds as the NHS deals with additional medical admissions. This requires us to monitor forecast COVID-19 pressure closely for the early part of 2021. The winter planning projections have been updated, indicating that at maximum 830 hospital beds will be needed for COVID-19 related cases over January and February, and around 75-80 ICU beds, due to downturns in admissions following the festive period. This falls within NHS capacity limits.

Societal Impacts (“harm 3”)

17. The harm caused by the virus to wider society, beyond harms 1 and 2, is substantial. This is particularly felt as a consequence of measures to reduce social contact. While these are necessary in order to reduce transmission of the virus, they increase isolation and anxiety. These impacts are not equally felt across society, and fall particularly on those who live alone, or whose lives are already subject to stress as a result of socio-economic and other inequalities. These impacts were taken into account in designing the measures which make up the levels approach; and in the *Strategic Framework* we committed to a range of actions to address inequalities, to prioritise protection and support for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, and to keep schools and childcare safely open.

18. However, regardless of our efforts to mitigate social harms, we recognise that for many people isolation and loneliness are a daily occurrence, with 56% of 18-44 year olds feeling lonely at least some of the time (YouGov, 17-18 Nov), a figure that is slowly rising. Happiness levels are slowly falling, although anxiety is fairly stable. As people spend longer in higher levels, they risk becoming more cut off from family, friends and community; and they may become more nervous about resuming a wider range of activities. For those experiencing them, isolation and loneliness are a particular issue at Christmas even in ordinary times. That is likely to be even more the case this year, including for those who are deciding whether to make use of the easings of restrictions from 23-27 December, or to follow advice not to do so.

19. Against that background, and to mitigate against the compounding effects of seasonal increases in the cost of living and the potential of a no-deal exit from the EU, on 30 November the First Minister announced a Winter Plan for Social Protection. Considerable progress has been made in delivering this package, and on Friday 11 December, COSLA Leaders agreed to distribution of additional resource to

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local authorities. This includes funding for vulnerable children's services, additional homelessness funding, and allocations for the £100 Winter Hardship Payment for children in receipt of Free School Meals, based on low income eligibility. Alongside this the Communities Secretary also announced an initial £3.29 million package of investment in nine children's charities, supporting families across the winter period, and the Equalities Minister announced almost £6 million in funding to provide friendship and human connection to people at risk of social isolation and loneliness over the winter months.

20. Clearly, societal impacts are more severe at higher levels of restriction, and increase as restrictions remain in place, particularly as we move deeper into winter. They should continue to be kept under close review, with close attention paid to indicators of social distress such as domestic abuse and family breakdown.

21. Public understanding of and confidence in government decision-making is an important factor in compliance and in societal confidence that restrictions are proportionate, necessary and justified. This is particularly important when considering significant changes, or alterations to pre-announced measures.

Economic Impacts ("harm 4")

22. The impact on economic activity of the virus and the measures necessary to suppress it is severe, both for areas subject to restrictions and for the Scottish economy as a whole. These effects are significantly exacerbated at higher levels, and are likely to be non-linear. The effects are also greater when restrictions are imposed on city economies, given that the cities account for a larger proportion of the Scottish economy.

23. Economic recovery is fragile. The latest business activity survey (Purchasing Managers' Index) for November shows output contracting, with the services sector, including accommodation and food services, weighing on overall business activity.

24. In Wave 1, more of the economy was closed - so the scale of economic contraction under Wave 2 will be smaller by comparison, but the economy is still expected to shrink in Wave 2 as a result of restrictions imposed (probably around 5% reduction in GDP in Q4 by comparison with 20% in Q2); and its resilience is much depleted. With nearly nine months since the first restrictions were imposed, many businesses in the most affected sectors are at a tipping point with a real risk of insolvency. Retail and recreation footfall, as measured by Google mobility data as at 7 December, is 30% below pre-COVID levels for Scotland as a whole. Retail and recreation footfall in the Edinburgh local authority area has been nearly 50% down on pre-COVID levels since mid-October and remains at that level as at 7 December. Retail and recreation footfall in the Glasgow local authority area is 57% down on pre-COVID levels as at 7 December but is expected to rise following the area's move to level 3 on 11 December.

25. In view of the serious impacts of restrictions on businesses right across the economy, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance last week announced an £185 million package of additional business support for a range of specific sectors, including in particular hospitality and tourism, taxis, weddings and events, building on the ongoing

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four-weekly payments under the Strategic Framework Business Support Fund. Officials continue to work with delivery partners including COSLA to ensure businesses will be able to apply for these funds in January, and agreed go-live dates are expected to be confirmed this week. The £30 million Local Authority Discretionary Fund now rests with local authorities. From 18 December, an ongoing programme of statistical publications will release information about uptake and costs of business support packages from October 2020 onwards.

26. As with previous COVID support, uptake is generally lower than expected. While this means that the administrative burden on delivery partners is lower, it also presents risks of business or political criticism. Elements of the £185 million package have therefore been predicated on less than full uptake, and officials are working with delivery partners and business organisations to raise awareness of grant availability and criteria. Work is also under way to develop an additional recovery-focused funding package for businesses for announcement as part of the Budget.

Engagement with local government

27. Local government is engaged in the levels review process through observer status for COSLA and SOLACE at the NIMT and in the Scottish Government's "Four Harms" consideration. In addition, officials engaged bilaterally with all local authorities where there was a case for a move in level. Following official-level contact, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government and I subsequently spoke to the leaders of the authorities concerned. The outcome of those calls is summarised in the feedback document which is reproduced at Annex B.

28. In general, local authorities were looking for some certainty about the arrangements for the next review, including to enable businesses to plan, and in the light of the potential impact the Christmas relaxations might have on local incidence. Some reported pressure from the teaching unions seeking a move towards home learning. A number, particularly city authorities, raised concerns around support for the hospitality sector.

29. It is plain from these discussions that communicating the basis for our decisions at this week's review, giving clear and strong messages about the Christmas relaxation and setting expectations for the period immediately after Christmas will be a particularly important and sensitive task.

Assessment and recommendations

30. Against that background, in light of the NIMT's advice and the consideration given to it by the Four Harms Group which met earlier today, I invite the Cabinet to consider the following proposals.

- ◆ **Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire:** we have been monitoring the position in both authorities closely over recent weeks. Last week, they stayed in Level 2; but a further week's data has seen an increase of more than 50% in case numbers in Aberdeen City, with test positivity now above 5% at 6.1%. Case numbers in Aberdeenshire have also risen; and though the increase is not as

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great, in neither case have we seen signs of a significant fall in case numbers. It appears clear that community transmission is higher than is compatible with Level 2, and I invite Cabinet to consider moving both areas to Level 3.

- ◆ **Falkirk, Angus:** Cabinet will note the NIMT's recommendation to move both these areas to Level 3. There has, however, been no consistent change in the data in the past week in either area, and the indicators continue to signal Level 2. I invite Cabinet to consider maintaining Level 2 for both areas, and monitoring the position carefully.
- ◆ **Edinburgh and Midlothian:** the data in the past week support our decision to maintain both these areas at Level 3, and I propose we maintain that position. As Cabinet is aware, last week's decision on Edinburgh was challenged in court last Thursday by a group of hospitality businesses seeking interim suspension of the decision. I was pleased to note the terms in which the court dismissed that petition, a summary of which was circulated to Cabinet on Sunday.
- ◆ **East Lothian:** I continue to be concerned by trends in the data here, where both cases per 100,000 population and test positivity are now higher than in Edinburgh, with adverse trends. Notwithstanding the NIMT's advice that East Lothian should remain in Level 2 with intensified local measures, Cabinet may wish to consider the case for applying Level 3.
- ◆ **Argyll & Bute:** though not addressed in the NIMT's advice, the position here merits Cabinet's consideration. An earlier outbreak at Faslane, which impacted on the case data and the forecast future case numbers, has been contained. Case numbers and test positivity are better now than before the outbreak. With the exception of the forecast of case numbers, influenced by the recent spike, the indicators now signal Level 1.

There are reasons to be cautious about such a move, bearing in mind both the incubation period of the virus and that parts of Argyll & Bute (for example, Helensburgh) are close to areas of higher prevalence. That said, Cabinet may wish to consider whether Level 2 remains proportionate, particularly for the "Argyll islands"; or it may choose to wait and look again at the position next week once a further transmission/incubation cycle from the Faslane outbreak has elapsed. If Cabinet were minded to support Level 1, it would be consistent with our approach elsewhere to ease the ban on in home socialising in these islands. I propose that the ban be maintained elsewhere, including in mainland Level 1 areas and islands with a road connection to the mainland.

31. I propose that all other areas should remain in their current levels.

Post-Christmas measures

32. The coming three weeks will see a number of changes to the conditions affecting transmission of the virus. Some people will take advantage of the easings of restrictions on travel and household gatherings between 23 and 27 December. There may also be reduced compliance with other restrictions, at a time of year when people's activities will be influenced by past years' habits and a desire to celebrate

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and be in touch with family and friends. On the other hand, schools and many workplaces will be closed, reducing activity that can allow the virus to spread.

33. While we can expect a “Christmas effect”, and we can expect it to be adverse, looking at experience of Thanksgiving in Canada and the USA, we cannot predict with accuracy what it will be. Against that background, we should certainly be ready to apply higher levels of protection as soon as that is justified, and I have indicated elsewhere in this paper the steps we are taking to ensure that there are weekly opportunities to review the position over the holiday period.

34. I am not, however, persuaded by the NIMT’s advice on pre-emptive Christmas measures. This proposal does not appear well thought-through. It fails to address the question of whether the national application of Level 4 measures would be proportionate in those parts of the country now in Level 1. It also appears to be based in part on the assumption that there will be no further opportunities for changes between now and early January, though we have consistently said that we will take measures before then if necessary to respond to any serious deterioration in the position. While that might happen for other reasons in the coming three weeks, it should be remembered that any “Christmas effect” will take some time to show up in the data, because of the incubation period of the virus. Announcing a pre-emptive national lockdown without data to support such a measure would call into question our approach to decision-making, which could be expected to affect compliance with existing and future measures. This would be counterproductive.

New strain of the virus

35. Cabinet will be aware that a new strain of the virus has been identified by genomic sequencing. Though these data have only just become available, they indicate that the new strain has been present in the UK since September; that by 13 December, it had been identified in nearly 60 different local authorities, including five cases in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area; and that extrapolation by modelling suggests there may have been at least 10,000 cases of the new variant to date.

36. The epidemiological analysis so far conducted suggests that the variant may be more transmissible, with a 60% faster growth rate than existing variants, though at this stage the confidence intervals round this figure are wide. There is no evidence to date to suggest that it is more likely to cause either more or less serious disease. Studies are now under way to understand whether this variant is affected by antibodies raised in response to infection with other strains of COVID-19, and how it responds to the vaccine. This work is expected to take until 24 December but the facility at Porton will attempt to expedite this output this week.

37. This is a potentially serious development. Even if the morbidity and mortality caused by the new variant is only as serious as existing strains, if the reported 60% greater rate of growth stands true, then it will have implications for the effectiveness of existing countermeasures. Though the new strain is probably already present in Scotland, there is a case for reducing the risk of importing more of it. This could mean revisiting the proposed easings of travel restrictions between 23 and 27 December.

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38. The Four Nations' CMOs discussed the new strain on Monday evening, and CMO will report to Cabinet from that discussion. In the meantime, I invite Cabinet to note the possible need for urgent decisions on retaining some travel restrictions over Christmas, and to remit decisions on that to the First Minister.

Public opinion, compliance and enforcement

39. At a national level, polling data on compliance remain strong across the areas of self-reported compliance, trust in government, clarity of message, support, self-isolation, enforcement and household contacts. However, a minority consistently report little support for the handling of situation. While the majority (65%) support the way restrictions in Scotland are being handled, 22% disagree (YouGov, 8-9 Dec). The majority (69%) trust the advice and guidance from the Scottish Government during the pandemic, 18% do not (YouGov, 8-9 Dec).

40. Knowledge of the protection levels is very good and stable, with 85% correctly identifying their current level – a slight drop from 91% the previous week reflecting the recent change of levels for many. Support for the introduction of protection levels is also high, with two thirds (67%) supporting it, and three quarters (73%) feeling clear on what is required under the levels system (YouGov, 8-9 Dec).

41. Self-reported compliance with self-isolation is relatively high. Of respondents who had to self-isolate at some point during the last 7 months (n=196), almost three quarters (72%) said they didn't leave home at all during the isolation period, although a quarter (26%) left home at least once (YouGov, 27-28 Oct).

42. It should, however, be noted that public opinion and attitudes about the proposed Christmas relaxations are very mixed. From recent polling (YouGov 8-9 December):

- ◆ Just over three quarters (76%) think the safest thing to do is spend Christmas at home with your own household even though restrictions are being relaxed;
- ◆ Just over half (54%) of people say that the right thing to do is to only take advantage of the relaxation to ensure that people aren't left alone;
- ◆ Over a third (36%) of the population plan to take advantage of the festive relaxation of rules;
- ◆ A third of people (32%) do not intend to meet up with friends/family over the festive period. A similar number (29%) say they are expecting visitors from outside their Local Authority area, whereas only 14% say they are planning to travel beyond their Local Authority to see friends/family; and
- ◆ Half (49%) of those who plan to create a Festive bubble will meet with up to 6 people and up to 2 other households, though 10% say they will meet with more than 8 people or more than 3 households.

43. People aged 18-44 are more likely to expect to take advantage of the eased restrictions (49% vs 29% aged 45+); those in Level 1 and 2 less likely (32% - Level 1, 34% - Level 2, 38% - Level 3 and 40% - Level 4).

44. The most recent polling from 1-2 Dec suggested that the most commonly reported planned activities over the festive period are:

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- ◆ To have a celebration dinner at home just with their own household (29%);
- ◆ Have a celebration dinner in with up to 8 people in total from up to 3 households (22%); and
- ◆ Travel to see friends and family within Scotland, but outside of local authority area (12%).

At Hogmanay, one in ten propose to celebrate with others, even if it is breaking the rules: while 71% worry about people not following the rules, and 62% think the police should take action in that situation.

45. Police Scotland continue to enforce the regulations governing the protective measures, with the latest data showing 1,356 COVID-19 interventions (including 1,033 compliance dispersals and 293 FPNs) issued in the seven days prior to 9 December. This included 41 travel restrictions interventions, with 22 FPNs issued. Enforcement activity over the weekend from 11-13 December covered household gatherings and office parties with over 200 FPN's issued.

Reviewing the *Strategic Framework* approach

46. Cabinet on 8 December noted the intention to use the Christmas and New Year period for a wider review of the Strategic Framework looking ahead to 2021. This review of the restrictions is necessary under the regulations and will follow the principles set out in the *Framework for Decision-Making*, including the 'four harms' approach. It will:

- ◆ Draw on experience and evidence on the impacts of the levels approach so far;
- ◆ Consider the contents of the levels (i.e. the individual restrictions within them);
- ◆ Consider the indicators and ranges that inform the levels allocation process;
- ◆ Review the process for decision-making (including the role of the four harms group; NIMT etc)
- ◆ Review compliance and the interaction with other aspects of our overall COVID-19 response, including mass testing and vaccination – as these have progressed significantly since the publication of the Strategic Framework in October and will have a bearing on the spread of the virus alongside the level of restrictions;
- ◆ Consider the strategic approach for the period to reaching Phase 4 of the Route Map, i.e. successful deployment of the vaccine such that the COVID is no longer a public health emergency; and
- ◆ Report to Ministers in time for decisions on recommendations for the review for 6 January Cabinet, with a view to implementation from the following week – in light of any appropriate Parliamentary scrutiny and stakeholder engagement.

Legal considerations

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Parliamentary Handling

48. The First Minister intends to announce the outcome of this week's review in a statement to Parliament on Tuesday 15 December. The Parliament's COVID-19 Committee will have an opportunity to consider this on Thursday 17 December.

Communications

49. The introduction of the *Strategic Framework* has created a platform for greater continuity and consistency of messaging on protection levels. Communications support is in place for the announcement of the review of levels. Comms News and Digital will use the wide range of platforms to engage with the media and the public. The national marketing 'protection levels' campaign will continue to drive the public to the post code checker and, where appropriate, bespoke regional activity can be developed and deployed.

50. The communications approach over the festive period includes a marketing campaign to achieve widespread awareness of the specific festive restrictions that highlights the dates, a range of safety measures to adopt, and the core message of 'just because you can meet up doesn't mean you should.' This multi-layered approach will be supported across a range of channels and by audience-specific strands of activity including Parents and Young People.

51. In addition, a number of other support campaigns have been activated such as the refreshed FACTS campaign to continue to embed hygiene behaviours, mental health / loneliness, support services and partnership activity to promote giving and outreach. After 27 December, to support the return to the pre-Christmas restrictions, compliance among non-compliant groups will be promoted in the run up to/post the Hogmanay by reactivating the previously successful and hard-hitting 'Paint' campaign.

Conclusion

52. **Cabinet is invited to:**

- (a) **Consider the proposed allocation of local authority areas to levels** (*paragraphs 30 - 31*);
- (b) **Discuss its position on possible post-Christmas measures** (*paragraphs 32 - 34*);
- (c) **Note the update on the new strain of the virus and its possible implications** (*paragraphs 35 -38*)
- (d) **Note the proposed scope and timetable for the review of the *Strategic Framework*** (*paragraph 46*);
- (f) **Delegate final decisions on allocation of levels to the First Minister for announcement in the course of Tuesday 15 December.**

JS
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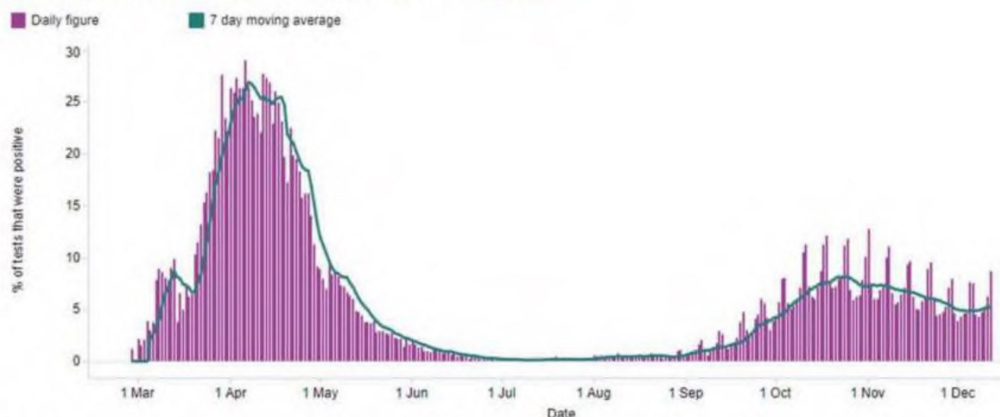
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ANNEX A : TRENDS IN NATIONAL INDICATORS

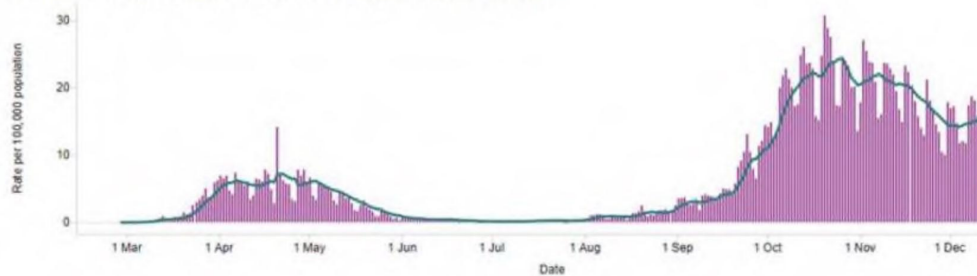
Updated with data published at 14:00 on 13 December 2020 on the [PHS Daily Dashboard](#).

Percentage of tests that were positive by specimen date in Scotland

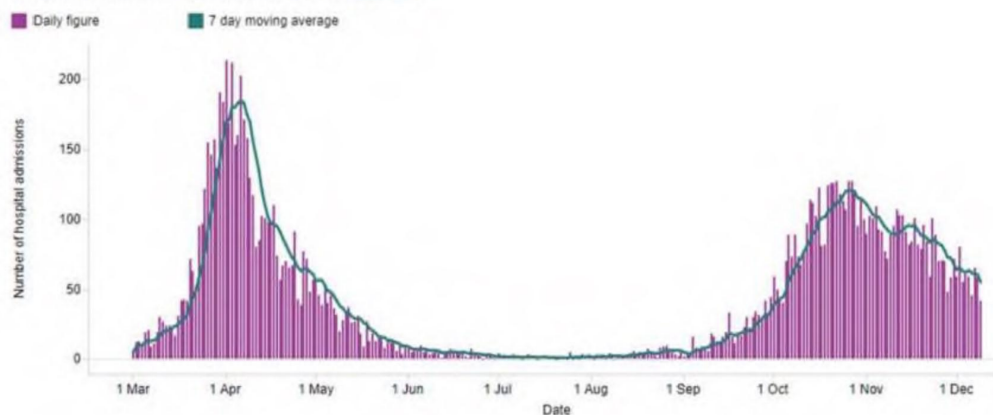


Figures for the most recent dates are likely to be incomplete due to the time required to process tests and submit records.

Rate of positive cases per 100,000 population by specimen date in Scotland

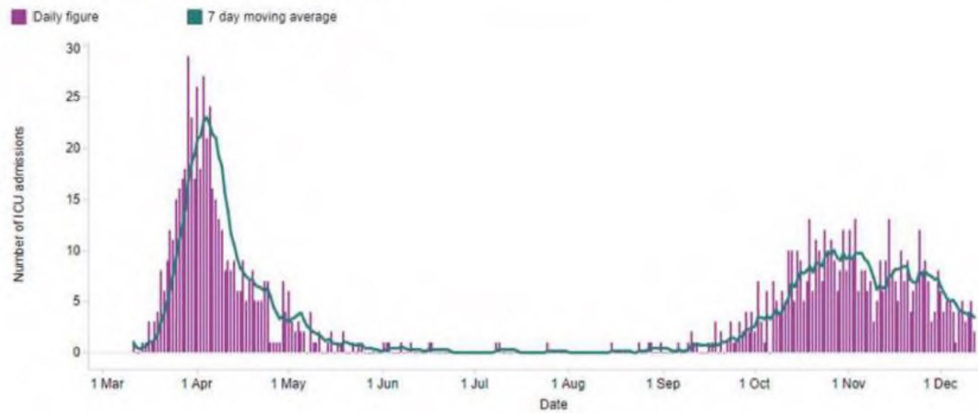


Hospital admissions by admission date in Scotland

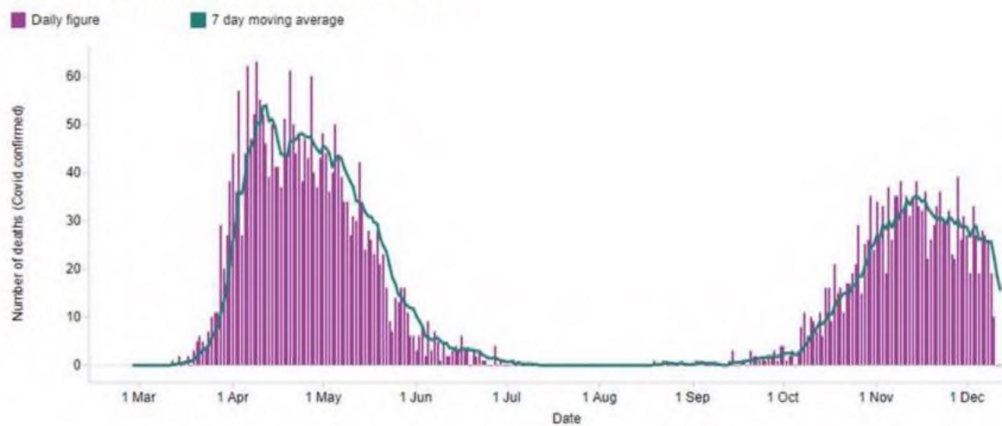


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ICU admissions by admission date in Scotland



Deaths (Covid confirmed) by date of death in Scotland



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ANNEX B

COVID-19: WEEKLY REVIEW OF PROTECTION LEVELS

SUMMARY OF CALLS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

14 DECEMBER 2020

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| Council | Current level | Call Participants | Allocated To | Comments/discussion points |
|---------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Aberdeenshire | 2 | SG: Brenda Campbell, Diane NR | DFM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council believes that specific outbreaks (fish and meat processing and care homes) are the reason for their high numbers • Community transmission is low • Various actions being taken locally : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grassroots comms campaign incl community bodies & trade associations, civic leaders, licensing body etc - Sharing of best practice eg shopping safely - Active programme of business premise visits incl enforcement with EHO/HSE - Safe shopping campaign - Safe leisure campaign - Comms & engagement across transport providers & locations ref safe travel - Reinforcement of safe working practise in schools - Reinforcement of safe working practise across all care settings, check on capacity & ppe incl family carers - Mobilisation of additional staff from Council to support to isolate activity - Mobilisation of additional NHS & Council staff to provide additional capacity in critical care settings & backfill - Working with other areas to explore & adopt best practise eg D&G on comms, Glasgow on care response teams - Discussion with SG on national messaging undermining local efforts - Discussion with SG on wider business support funding availability to help support businesses comply <p>On interaction with Aberdeen City, confirmed different trends of transmission across the areas and no direct read across of patterns of transmission</p> |

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|--------------|---|--|-----|--|
| East Lothian | 2 | <div>NR</div> <div>Leitch</div> <div>NR</div> | DFM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference made to a large gathering of young people in Musselburgh as being the main issue Action taken with children and families now isolating Main prevalence is within Musselburgh and Prestonpans Seeking a further week at Level 2 to demonstrate measures being taken are working Concerns for local businesses and their sustainability after a brief reopening Working with local sports personalities this week who are delivering messages of following the rules to young people Agreed to inform council of decision prior to the 2.20pm statement in Parliament |
| Edinburgh | 3 | <div>NR</div> <div>Leitch</div> <div>NR</div> | DFM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noted the position on numbers Asked for confirmation of the NIMT recommendation – advised not aware but expect Level 3 Sought clarity on the next review point and confirmation of the review beyond that Raised a specific issue about resources to support hospitality and retail in the city centre. DFM confirmed he would pursue substantive engagement on this matter for both Edinburgh and Glasgow AK agreed to provide a further note on an issue related to tourism funding which they understood would be removed in the new year |
| Aberdeen | 2 | <div>NR</div> <div>McQueen</div> <div>NR</div> <div>Cllr Douglas Lumsden</div> <div>NR</div> | DFM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wanted to be clear on the timelines for this review and if the decision was to be made for an increase, then how long would this be in place for Concerned that a move to Level 3 would drive more in home socialisation as the ability to meet in controlled hospitality environments is removed Concerned about the economic impact on the hospitality industry. Industry locally have just introduced a new app which is effectively track and trace and they will feel aggrieved after these efforts. They also feel aggrieved after previous measures in August which also meant they missed the eat out to help out campaign Seeking additional support for businesses – DFM referenced back to Ms Forbes announcement last week and advised that support for business was constantly being reviewed to reflect the ongoing circumstances across Scotland |

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| Midlothian | 3 | NR John Harden NR | Ms Campbell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting that latest data not going the right way, though highlighted continuing volatility associated with small population Would welcome support in establishing permanent testing centre in Midlothian- alternative to current part time facility is travel to City of Edinburgh (Usher Hall) Looking closely at preventing transmission at large retail sites (eg IKEA), including police support to discourage travel from other local authority areas, especially where the boundary is in the immediate vicinity Looking at impact of there being a large population of frontline key workers in LA on transmission rates (eg those commuting to work in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary) |
| Argyll & Bute | 2 | NR John Harden NR | Ms Campbell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faslane outbreak contained Emphasised very low levels/indicators in rest of LA continuing, including areas close to other LA's in much higher levels Island areas further removed, very low or no incidence along with strong community support for prevention Looking for relaxation to allow more support for isolated/elderly/single person households, especially in island areas. |
| West Dunbartonshire | 3 | NR John Harden NR | Ms Campbell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern that 28 delayed discharge cases (mostly legal/guardianship issues for adults with incapacity) distorting availability of hospital beds and keeping it at level 3. Balancing compliance fatigue with current levels against potential need for tighter restrictions after Christmas Pressure from EIS for home learning Would be helpful to be sighted on timing of next review timescales for staff and comms planning Need communications with Council when announcements are made- did not happen at last review when it was needed for staff planning/deployment and essential for local comms |

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| North Ayrshire | 3 | <div>NR</div> <div>Diane Murray</div> <div>NR</div> | Ms Campbell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges position shown by data • Latest spike included a school which closed on Friday 11/12 • School term finishes on 23/12- thinking about closing sooner and moving to remote learning, especially given parental concerns and numbers of children already held back from schools. EIS lobbying for this. • Concerns that increased teacher workload from blended/remote learning might impact on their ability to monitor children at risk, although they have contingency plans for childcare hubs to mitigate this if schools close. • Some contingency planning already underway for potential move to a higher level after Christmas/into New Year • Practical difficulty of ensuring compliance amongst health and social care staff- large staff numbers working in difficult circumstances |
| Stirling | 3 | <div>NR</div> <div>John Harden</div> <div>NR</div> <div>Carol Beattie</div> | Ms Campbell | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasised comparison to Falkirk which is at level 2, and how localities in Stirling and Falkirk tend to act as one community, even though they straddle a LA boundary. Communications difficult in such circumstances where rules are different in what is perceived as the one place. • Questionable whether wet pubs would reopen in response to shift to level 2. • Highlighted diversity within Stirling LA from urban to very remote, and how behaviours, and virus transmission, behaves differently in each. |
| Falkirk | 2 | <div>NR</div> <div>Diane Murray</div> <div>NR</div> | DFM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real challenge has been people travelling in to the area to shop and going to pubs and restaurants. • Too early to draw conclusions as figures went up and then started to come back down. Would prefer to see a longer run of data before decisions are made. Concern for retailers and hospitality if level is changed and the management of that. • Particular issue with a sheltered housing complex which has been resolved • Reassurance that strong comms in place and will continue • Reassurance that EHO's and trading standards working hard on compliance. |