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Covid in Scotland: Cases doubling weekly after restrictions eased

🕑 30 August 2021

Coronavirus

PA MEDIA

| More than 7,000 positive tests were recorded on Sunday

Covid cases in Scotland have roughly doubled every week since restrictions eased, leading to an increase in hospital admissions.

More than 500 people with Covid-19 are in hospital and case numbers hit a record high at the weekend.

According to the latest WHO figures, Lanarkshire and Glasgow's health board areas had Europe's highest case rates.

National clinical director Prof Jason Leitch said the NHS was stretched and elective surgeries could be delayed.

Scotland wanted "to get on top" of the virus and may need a "reverse gear" on some restrictions, he told the BBC.

On Sunday 7,113 positive tests were recorded compared with fewer than 1,500 on 9 August, when most of the Covid restrictions in Scotland were lifted.

Physical distancing rules and the limits on gatherings were removed, and all venues were allowed to reopen.

- **Nicola Sturgeon tests negative for Covid-19**

- Record Covid cases as NHS faces 'perfect storm'

- Warning as major events return despite Covid surge

A further 3,893 new cases were reported on Monday, with 14.1% of tests taken giving a positive result. This number is thought to be an underestimate because of a data backlog in the system in the testing laboratories.

The number of hospital patients rose to a total of 551, with 52 in intensive care.

Across the UK, the average number of daily confirmed cases, which had been falling in recent weeks, has been **rising for several days** with 26,476 confirmed cases announced on Monday.

There were 48 more deaths registered - 42 in England and **six in Northern Ireland**.

Vaccines 'preventing harm'

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon previously said she was reassured that "vaccines are preventing the levels of serious health harms that case numbers like this would once have caused", but urged people to take care.

She went into self-isolation on Sunday after being contact traced by NHS Test and Protect as a close contact of someone with the virus.

However, she has now said that her own **PCR test came back negative** -
meaning she no longer needed to isolate because she was fully vaccinated.

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Under Scotland's Covid-19 rules, she is able to exit quarantine as she had her
second dose of vaccine more than two weeks ago.

The SNP leader said she would continue to regularly take lateral flow tests as
an "added precaution", and encouraged others to do likewise.

'NHS under pressure'

Speaking to **BBC Scotland**, Prof Leitch said: "We are hopeful that things might
slow down, but there aren't many signs of that.

"We're doubling every seven days and that would mean we get to 10,000
sometime this week, maybe even beyond that by the end of the week.
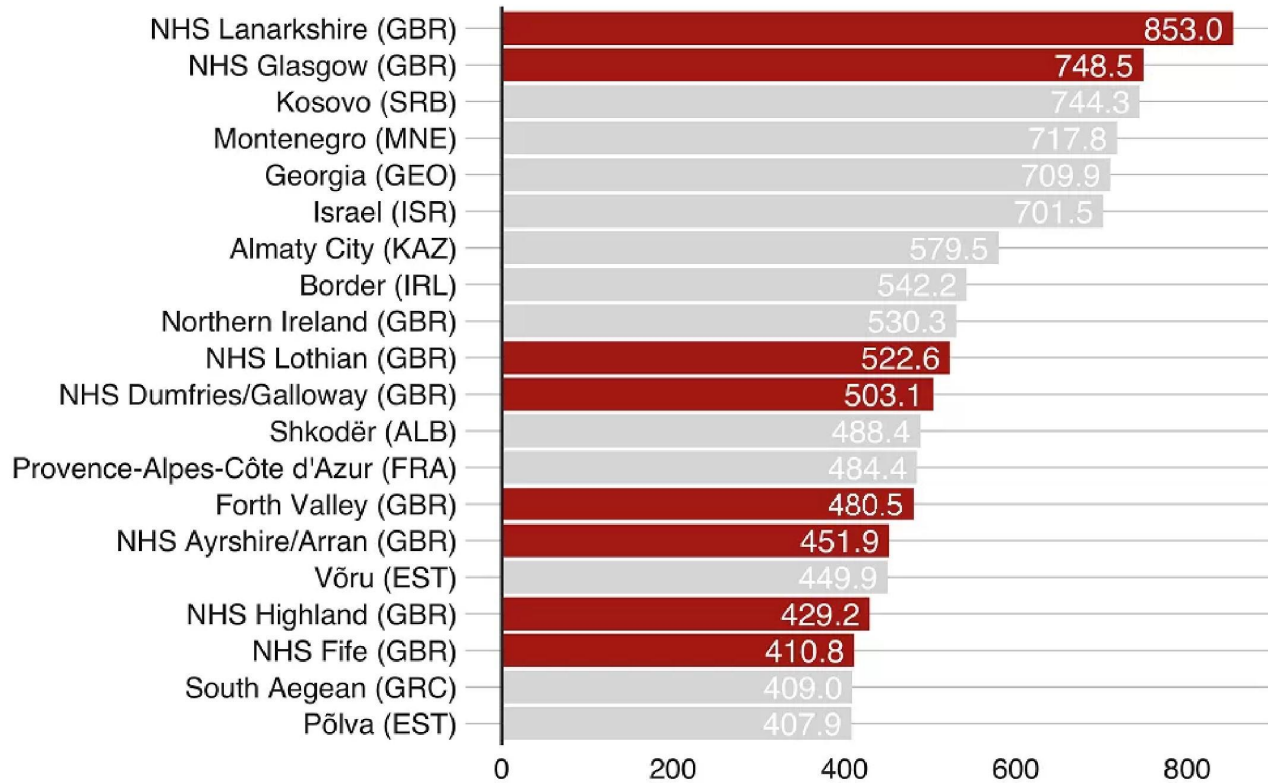
"But it is in our hands. There are things we can do about that - vaccination,
testing and following the rules, the three things everybody now knows so
well."

He said people now catching Covid were younger, healthier and going to hospital for shorter periods of time, but increasing numbers overall meant more people would become seriously ill.

"We're now beginning to see rises in hospital admissions and that is harm," he said. "We don't admit people to hospital for no reason."

Covid hotspots across Europe

Rates of coronavirus per 100,000 people as of 30 August

Region	Rate
NHS Lanarkshire (GBR)	853.0
NHS Glasgow (GBR)	748.5
Kosovo (SRB)	744.3
Montenegro (MNE)	717.8
Georgia (GEO)	709.9
Israel (ISR)	701.5
Almaty City (KAZ)	579.5
Border (IRL)	542.2
Northern Ireland (GBR)	530.3
NHS Lothian (GBR)	522.6
NHS Dumfries/Galloway (GBR)	503.1
Shkodër (ALB)	488.4
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (FRA)	484.4
Forth Valley (GBR)	480.5
NHS Ayrshire/Arran (GBR)	451.9
Võru (EST)	449.9
NHS Highland (GBR)	429.2
NHS Fife (GBR)	410.8
South Aegean (GRC)	409.0
Põlva (EST)	407.9

Source: World Health Organization

BBC

NHS Lanarkshire and NHS Glasgow top a list of the worst-hit regions in Europe, according to World Health Organization (WHO) figures with 853 and 748.5 cases per 100,000 respectively.

Six other Scottish health boards - Lothian, Dumfries and Galloway, Forth Valley, Ayrshire and Arran, Highland and Fife - also feature in the top 20.

NHS Lanarkshire announced that patients would only be able to have one visitor per day because of the increase in Covid cases in their hospitals while NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde is the latest health board to announce it is postponing elective surgery.

Prof Leitch said the increase in Covid cases was partly caused by the Delta variant being more transmissible, schools opening and more people meeting and gathering after lockdown restrictions were removed.

The health service was under pressure already, "with or without Covid", he added.

"When you add a new infectious disease on top of what we already manage, diabetes, and strokes and heart attacks and everything else that comes through our community and hospital system, of course it is stretched."

Prof Jason Leitch is working with groups to address vaccine hesitancy

Efforts to tackle a backlog of elective procedures built up in the past year was being challenged by the latest surge, he said.

"The only thing you can turn off in a health system is elective care. You can't postpone strokes, heart attacks and emergency admissions for the elderly.

"We don't want to do that but if you need staff, beds etc for a novel infection disease then that's what you have to do because you can't just make respiratory consultants out of nowhere, or nurses in charge of intensive care out of nowhere, so you have to be flexible in that."

'Vaccine hesitant' groups

Prof Leitch warned that there had to be a "reverse gear" to protect public health but said further restrictions might not be a "short, sharp shock", but turning off "some bits of society".

"I hope we don't have to do any of that," he said.

Overall, 82.1% of over-18s in Scotland are fully vaccinated and 91.1% have had at least a first dose.

Prof Leitch said he was working with groups who were "vaccine hesitant" to address concerns.

"They have got legitimate questions," he said. "Some of it is, of course, scientific nonsense. The fertility one - there is no biological method where a vaccine could hurt fertility in any conceivable way - but there are legitimate questions about the blood clots, about allergies, that we can answer. When we answer, people come forward [for a vaccine]."

Scotland was "operationally ready for the 12 to 15-year-olds" when the JCVI approve vaccinations for that age group, he added.

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