



MEDIA RELEASE

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Caution urged as restrictions relaxed

As people across Highland, Argyll and Bute start to enjoy their new freedoms with restrictions going beyond Level 0 NHS Highland is urging members of the public to still remain cautious as cases are expected to rise over the next few weeks.

Dr Tim Allison, Director of Public Health for NHS Highland, said: “During the first week of August we had over 400 cases which is quite a significant increase compared to previous weeks.

“It has been a very challenging few months for everyone and it is right that the new found freedoms we now have should be enjoyed. We can now catch up with family and friends, and travel bit more. However, with relaxing of the restrictions and schools about to go back we are expecting a further rise in cases.

“Everyone has worked so hard to keep COVID at bay. It is thanks to everyone’s hard work that we are where we are but I would make a plea that we all still remain vigilant over symptoms to ensure that these new found freedoms are not short lived.”

A number of care homes, businesses and events held in the NHS Highland area are continuing to feel the impact of COVID. A reminder that this virus is still here and can still do damage.

Fort William in particular has seen an increase with 56 cases in the area since Friday and the rate in the Lochaber area is currently 444 per 100,000.

Dr Allison said: “I am acutely aware that the majority of people will want to move forward and we can still do that. However, we need to be aware of what symptoms to look out for and, if you have them, the importance of isolating immediately and arranging for a PCR test.

“The typical symptoms are a new continuous cough, a high temperature or fever and a loss of, or change in, normal taste or smell (anosmia). However, people with COVID-19 can present with a wide range of symptoms including headache, sore muscles and joints, tiredness, sore throat, cold-like symptoms and diarrhoea and vomiting.”

“I’d also encourage LFD testing for those without symptoms which will help us keep on top of those who could have COVID but do not have any symptoms.

"Finally I'd encourage everyone eligible to please come forward for their vaccine when invited. The programme in NHS Highland continues to do well with over 90% of over 18s having received their first dose. The vaccine really is our way out of this pandemic and I hope when invited you do decide to get vaccinated."

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