

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### COVID-19 update

In keeping with other areas of Scotland, there has been a significant increase in cases of COVID-19 across Highland, with 83 cases notified in our area on Tuesday (22<sup>nd</sup> June).

In the entire month of May, we registered 154 positive COVID-19 cases across Highland, Argyll and Bute which highlights the alarming rise in case numbers we are experiencing.

We are seeing an increase in cases in areas such as Caithness, Inverness, Oban, Helensburgh, Dunoon and Nairn.

Of the 32 local authorities in Scotland, Argyll and Bute is now sitting in tenth place with respect to the highest rates of COVID-19 across Scotland although rates are rising across the whole of NHS Highland.

Although the restrictions have been easing, COVID-19 has not gone away and it is vital that everyone across Highland, Argyll and Bute remains cautious and follows the guidance on how to stay safe and limit the spread of COVID-19.

Dr Tim Allison, NHS Highland's Director of Public Health, said: "As well as an increase in cases, we are seeing an increasing number of outbreaks in our communities. COVID-19 is spreading much more rapidly as a result of the Delta variant and because of the increase in mixing.

"COVID-19 has definitely not gone away. Not only is this rise in cases impacting on the individuals affected but multiple school classes are self-isolating, businesses across Highland have closed due to outbreaks and there have also been impacts on our local healthcare services as a result of staff isolating.

"It is vital that we all continue to follow the Scottish Government FACTS guidance and that we all minimise contact with other people to try and reduce the spread whilst the rates of COVID-19 are high. Although the levels have reduced, this doesn't mean that COVID-19 has gone away."

We would urge communities across Highland to remain vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19. 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

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symptoms and diarrhoea and vomiting. Anyone that becomes unwell should isolate immediately and seek a PCR test. Tests can be booked through NHS Inform online or by calling 0800 028 2816.

Dr Allison continued: "Given the rapid rise in cases, the contact tracing team are working extremely hard but it is taking a little bit longer for the contact tracing team to make contact. Please bear with the team and continue to isolate and the team will be in touch as soon as they can.

"I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the public for their engagement and for everything they are doing to try to reduce the spread within their local communities.

"The vaccination programme is incredibly successful but not everyone has been vaccinated and it is vital that we are cautious until everyone has had an opportunity to be vaccinated. Please limit your contact with other people to try to minimise the risk of further spread."

The number of cases in each area highlighted is below:

**Caithness** – 28 cases in June to-date. There were no recorded cases in May.

**Nairn** – 18 cases in June to-date. There were less than five recorded cases in May.

**Inverness** – 73 cases in June to-date. There were 45 recorded cases in May.

**Oban** – 64 cases in June to-date. There were less than five recorded cases in May.

**Dunoon** – 59 cases in June to-date. There were less than five recorded cases in May.

**Helensburgh and Garelochhead** – 106 cases in June to-date. There were 10 recorded cases in May.

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

We are unable to provide details for figures less than five due to patient confidentiality.

To access a [PCR test click here](#). PCR tests detect the genetic material of a virus and are the most reliable coronavirus tests.

To access Coronavirus Rapid LFD Test if you DO NOT have symptoms [click here](#) or visit your local pharmacy.

A Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Test is used for people without symptoms. LFD tests detect proteins in coronavirus. They're simple and quick to use, so are sometimes called rapid tests. Everyone in Scotland can do this type of test twice a week. LFD tests are not as accurate as PCR tests and are mainly used in people who do not have symptoms. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, do not use a rapid LFD test. People with symptoms should access PCR tests.

Public Health COVID-19 interactive dashboard provides location of COVID-19 cases in Scotland [click here](#).

