

Here is the brief for Friday 17 December 2021.

Do you need help? We want to start today's brief by reminding you of the various places you can seek support if you are struggling with your mental health and wellbeing:

The Psychological Resilience Hub continues to offer support, in the form of 1-3 sessions of psychological first aid. [You can self-refer to the hub, all the information you need is here.](#)

[The We Care webpages](#) include information on other work-based options (such as the Chaplaincy service and counselling via Occupational Health).

If you need to speak to someone in confidence, the Samaritans are available 24/7 on 116 123. Alternatively, you can call Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87. They operate Mon-Thurs, 6pm – 2am, and from 6pm on Fridays until 6am on Mondays.

Staff “Exemption from Isolation” to attend work Further clarification from Public Health Scotland has been received, as follows:

- Household contacts

Across the population, those in the same household as a case of COVID-19 must isolate for 10 days. Healthcare and social care staff who are living in an affected household can attend work if they meet the [specified “exemption” criteria](#). This is an exemption from household isolation **to attend work only**. Staff who are exempted **must complete isolation with their household when not at work**

- Non-household contacts

Across the population, those identified as a contact of a case of COVID-19 must isolate for 10 days unless they meet [the criteria to shorten this](#). These criteria also apply to those who are employed as healthcare and social care workers in relation to their lives **outside of work**. Please note that healthcare and social care staff, who are identified as a non-household contact of a case, must also meet the additional [specified “exemption” criteria](#) to be able to attend their work.

The Omicron wave It was confirmed earlier today that Omicron is now the dominant strain of COVID-19 in Scotland. Numbers may be rising but we have not yet felt its effects. This is the calm before the storm. We are transitioning between two pandemics: Delta and Omicron, and the signs are that we are at the start of Omicron's acceleration. When cases start to accelerate, the situation will deteriorate very quickly. There is still uncertainty about the new variant and serious illness, however the sheer growth advantage of Omicron could outweigh any reduction in severity. With the scale of spread we are seeing, it is likely you will come into contact with someone infected with this variant. Even if you don't become very sick yourself, you could still pass it on to someone who will, particularly people who are unvaccinated or vulnerable. We're already operating at maximum capacity across the health & social care system. An Omicron surge is highly likely to overwhelm our services. We don't say this to panic or upset you, simply to be factual.

How you can help:

- **Boost:** You are not fully vaccinated until you have had your 3rd dose/or booster. We shared information in last night's brief on the options open to health & social care staff.
- **Test:** Lateral Flow Device kits are available to staff in all roles – if you aren't already registered [you can sign up here](#). Test daily and remember to log your results.
- **Limit contacts:** Try to meet just with those who really matter – avoid crowds. When meeting other households indoors, keep rooms well ventilated.
- **Work at home** if your role permits.
- Follow all workplace Infection Prevention & Control measures and – when not in work – use a face mask or face covering wherever it is required.

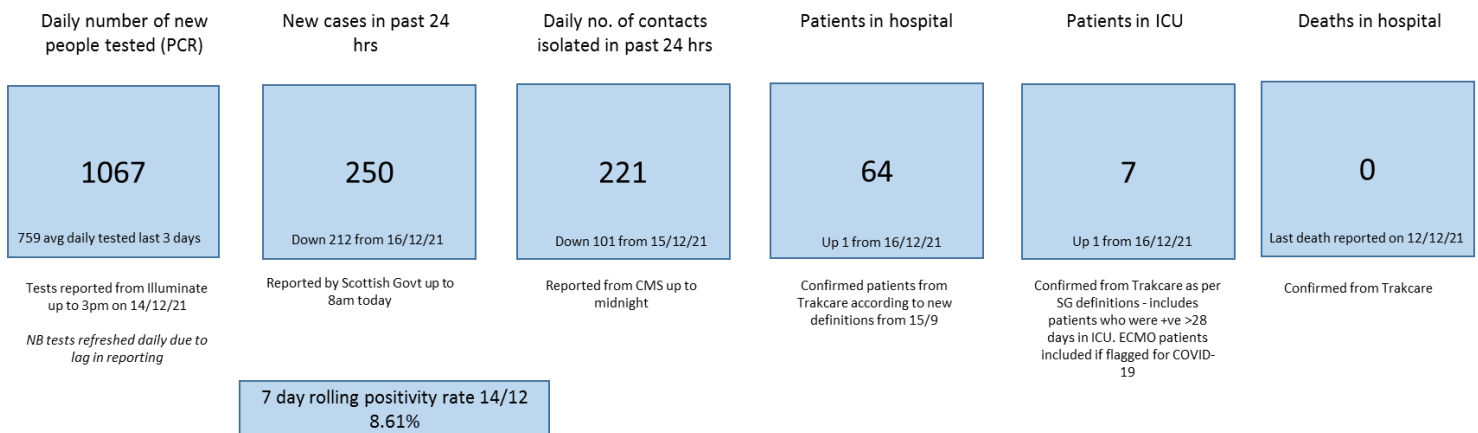
[If you want to take a closer look at the full guidance from the Scottish Government you can do so here.](#)

Endowment Fund Staff Social Activities Support Scheme Following the recent guidance for us all to adopt a cautious approach, and where possible to restrict Christmas Parties and other group social activities, it is with regret that this scheme will no longer consider requests for re-imburement for future activities **unless** the planned use of the funds is to support a virtual or other activity that does not involve a gathering.

This position will remain until we see ourselves clear of this new stage in the pandemic and as soon as National and Local guidance considers that such gatherings are safe again. The Endowment support team are currently working through and will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible to all requests and queries received to date. If you require any advice on this matter then please email

gram.charities@nhs.scot

Grampian data The local update for today is shown below. [The Public Health Scotland daily dashboard is available to view via this link.](#)



Orange Award Hearty congratulations to Karen Wilson (Medical Secretary, CLDT Moray) and Charlene Mackintosh (Radiographer, Fraserburgh Hospital) who both collected their Orange Awards this week. The name may be changing (to the STAR Award) but the philosophy remains the same; if you know somebody (or somebodies) going above and beyond, why not nominate them? All you need to do is fill in [the online nomination form](#).

Advent Achievements The team based at Horizons rehabilitation centre held a Secret Santa with a twist this year. Instead of giving gifts to one another, they have donated children's clothing to local charity Home-Start Aberdeen. This is yet another amazing example of all of you working in health & social care thinking about those in need in our communities – well done and thank you!

Thought for the day It's been another day of difficult messages. It can be really hard to read all of them and keep anxiety levels in check. This brief exists to give you as much information as we possibly can. We don't take names, there isn't a test at the end. Take what you need from it. Sometimes you will want to read it line by line, some days you might just look at the 'blue boxes' and listen to the tune. That's ok.

It was pointed out to me yesterday that I write these thoughts in the first person, assuming you know who I am, when lots of you don't! So, hello. I'm Emma Pettis, I'm part of the Corporate Communications team and I am (mostly) the author of the brief. Lots of people from across the organisation support me to put it together, but this little section is 100% me.

Tune of the day Elizabeth Wilson and Fiona McKenzie are among the (very) many of you who were due to see Deacon Blue in Aberdeen tomorrow. Yet another postponement. They left the song choice up to me – Dignity is the obvious option, but that's been previously featured, so have [Real Gone Kid](#) instead.

Stay safe this weekend. If you're working – thank you. If you're not, we hope you get some time to relax. The brief will be back on Monday.

If you want to request a song for tune of the day, follow up on items included in this brief, or suggest an item for sharing, drop us an email via gram.communications@nhs.scot