

Here is the brief for Friday 21 January 2022.

The state of the virus There is strengthening evidence we are turning the tide on the Omicron wave. We've seen another reduction in detected cases in Grampian in the week to 18 January from a daily case average of 864 to 478. We know looking at case numbers cannot be relied upon solely to understand the true case burden in our communities because of changes in testing policy, but there are encouraging signs about prevalence through the ONS infection survey where in Scotland, the percentage of people testing positive decreased in the week ending 15 January.

One of the most assuring signs of change is what's happening with COVID-19 hospital admissions and occupancy. As this week's [situational update video](#) shows, admissions have been slowing and the number of people in hospital 'for' covid is reducing. We can also be reassured from other places who were 'ahead' of us in the Omicron wave, who have now passed a peak and whose hospitalisations have stabilised. However, it's worth noting the experiences of others has not shown a rapid drop, but rather a slow decrease, suggesting that we will have to manage with high levels of occupancy for several weeks yet.

Pragmatism not Panic We wanted to take some time to reflect today, so we present this piece, a joint effort by James Anderson and Emma Pettis:

It has been a whirlwind in recent weeks. Just before Christmas the threat posed by Omicron felt, frankly, ominous. It was hard to escape the feeling a rising tide, which threatened to overwhelm us, was on its way. However, we – as always – met this challenge planned, prepared, and with more than a dash of north-east pragmatism.

There is now change in the air. Restrictions and isolation rules are all easing, we seem to be past the peak of Omicron. We are all tired, done with it, and the thought of it being over can only be met with gratitude and relief. Of course, there are uncertainties, even arguments, swirling around these next steps. Too much? Not enough? What happens next? Some of this we do know. Much we do not. What we can do at this point is step back from some of these larger considerations, and focus on what we know now, about our own place, workplaces and community, the pragmatic of the title.

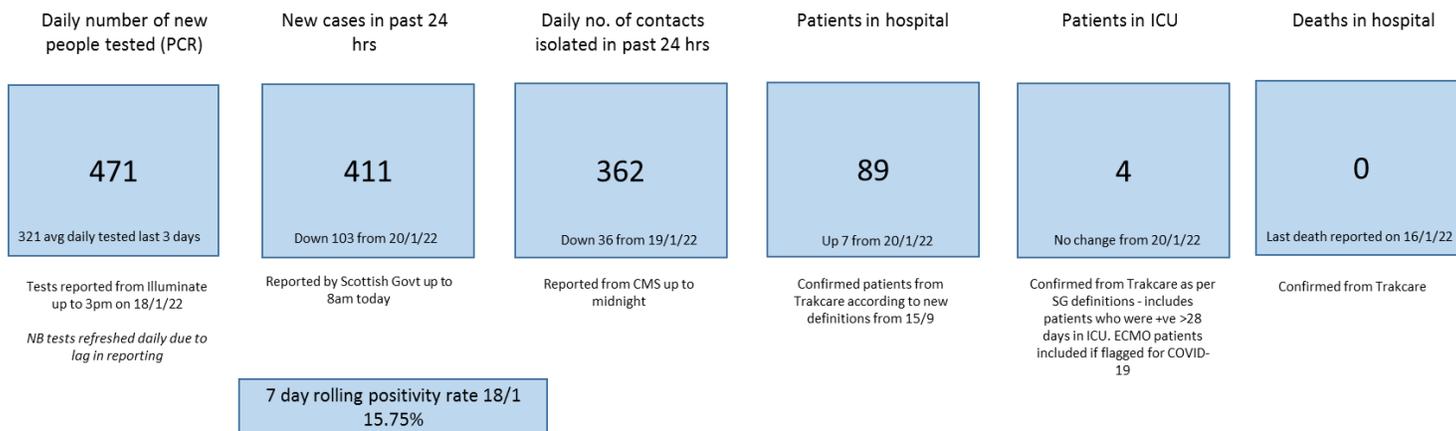
While things are looking better, in health & social care the pressures are huge, and will remain so, as the fall in the numbers is yet to flow through. While COVID cases are not growing, people are still getting sick, still sadly dying. We still have a growing list of non-COVID healthcare needs to meet

Pragmatism means looking at the reality of what happens in the wake of any large event. There is a period of resolution, attending to what has been put aside, a necessary patience and recognition that services, individuals, the health & social care system, along with business and government, will need time to find its way back after a phenomenal two years.

This does not mean stopping. Rather it means recognising the end is in sight – thanks to all our cautious collective action – and ensuring we maintain that caution just a little longer. We must also be realistic about how quickly we can get back to 'normal' and what that might look like. We must also be patient with one another, recognising this process will vary from person to person.

Grampian data

The local update for today is shown below.



[The Public Health Scotland daily dashboard is available to view via this link.](#)

STAR Awards We have three recent award recipients to highlight today – Shiona McKelvie (Regional Lead, OPD Training, Theatres) for her outstanding contribution to the training and development of Operating Department Assistants, Ronnie Lawson (Estates Officer, DGH) for his work co-ordinating staff during Storm Arwen, and Nicole Gibb (Staff Nurse, ECU RACH) for always being there to support her team. Well done to all the award winners! If you want to nominate a colleague or team who always goes above and beyond at work, you can either [complete the online nomination form](#) or send an email to gram.staffthanksandrecognition@nhs.scot

Gleneagles Draw The draw to win vouchers for an overnight stay at Gleneagles took place just before Christmas. All winners have been informed and all prizes claimed. Thanks to everyone who took part!

Ticket offer Thanks to Karen Cranfield (Consultant Anaesthetist) for highlighting a ticket offer for NHS staff. There are 20 tickets available for The Hunchback of Notre Dame at the Aberdeen Arts Centre on Tuesday 25 January. The show is suitable for those aged 12+, tickets are first come, first served, and available [via the Arts Centre website](#), using the code NHS2022.

Tune of the day There is only one artist we could select today – MeatLoaf. Following the announcement of his death at the age of 74, lots of you have been in touch to suggest your favourite tunes. Of course, we have to include [Bat Outta Hell](#). However, I also wanted to draw your attention to his version of [Somebody Loves Me](#), recorded for a Gershwin compilation album in 1994. In the midst of all the massive production of MeatLoaf's standard fare, it was easy to lose sight of a great voice. This song lets him shine.

If you are working this weekend, thank you and take care. If not, we hope you get some time to relax and do something just for you. It's been another busy week, but we've made it through. The brief will return 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