

REPORT TO ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL – 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

COVID-19 UPDATE

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 This report is to provide the Council with an update on the Council's response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and work being done on the recovery.

2 Recommendations

The Council is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the ongoing response of the Council as a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act and work being done on the Recovery phase.**

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 This report is coming before the Council as a reflection of the significance of the ongoing response to the pandemic. It is an opportunity for elected members to discuss Aberdeenshire wide ramifications. It is a report for noting and any other necessary decision making in respect of the Council's current activity will follow the Council's agreed delegations in terms of the Scheme of Governance.
- 3.2 Since 30 April 2020, Council have been provided with an update on the COVID-19 pandemic at each of its meetings.
- 3.3 A timeline of key events and milestones in the UK and the Scottish Government response to the emergency since the last COVID-19 update to Council on 24 June 2021 is attached at **Appendix 1**.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 A verbal report with the most up to date information will be provided at the meeting. Members will wish to note the highlights and focal points of the council efforts in the following key areas:
- 4.2 **IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES & BUSINESS** - Since 9th August, Scotland has moved beyond level zero meaning that the majority of restrictions have been removed and significantly more normality has returned to day-to-day life in our communities. The legal requirement for physical distancing and limits on gatherings were removed and all venues across Scotland were able to re-open. Some protective measures remained in place such as the use of face coverings indoors and the collection of contact details as part of Test and Protect. Capacity limits of 2000 people indoors and 5000 people outdoors also remained in place. These provisions are reviewed on a three weekly basis to ensure they remain proportionate.

Adults identified as close contacts of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 are no longer automatically required to self-isolate for 10 days. Anyone who is double vaccinated with at least two weeks passed since their second dose and who has no symptoms will be able to end self-isolation if they return a negative PCR test. The same conditions apply to anyone aged between five and 17 years old, even if they have not been vaccinated. The requirement to take a PCR test does not apply to children under the age of five.

- 4.3 VIRUS SUPPRESSION –Working together with NHS and Public Health colleagues, intensive efforts have been focused on suppression of the virus in Aberdeenshire combining practical interventions, communications, and messaging in order to address the rates of infection in our area. The cross-sector officer Surge Coordination Group continues to meet fortnightly. Rates of infection have been rising significantly across Scotland, likely as a consequence of the returns of schools and lifting of restrictions in August. Although this has also been the case in Aberdeenshire the rates are lower by comparison with Scotland wide data.

At time of writing, the rate per 100,000 sits at 359 with predominance being in the unvaccinated groups, particularly the 19-39yrs age group. Hospitalisations in Grampian have increased slightly although still remain relatively low at present despite the rising transmission rates recently. The focus is on monitoring any localized outbreaks, ready to take corrective action and to promote consistent messages of a steady and gradual approach to the removal of restrictions with a firm promotion of baseline measures and their importance still wherever possible—handwashing, sanitizing, facemasks, distancing, homeworking.

- 4.4 VACCINATION PROGRAMME – At 31st August, 94.4% of adults in Aberdeenshire have received their first dose, with 88% receiving their second, well above the Scottish average. The team is awaiting guidance from the JCVI on who will be eligible for the Covid booster, along with advice on offering 12-15 year olds the vaccine. The roll-out of the flu vaccine is also getting underway, co-ordinated, and administered by the same team. Work continues on the creation of permanent vaccination centres across Aberdeenshire, as responsibility for all vaccinations (including those previously administered by GPs and school nurses) will be managed in the future through the Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership.
- 4.5 COMMUNITY TESTING - The Council continues to lead the asymptomatic testing programme across Aberdeenshire with supported testing and the collection of free home testing kits, available from academy towns and larger settlements on a regular basis, will continue through the Autumn months. Information on where the testing team will be on a daily basis is available on the council's website ([Community testing - Aberdeenshire Council](#)) and 'myaberdeenshire' app. Symptomatic testing also continues to be available at 8 locations across Aberdeenshire, delivered by the Scottish Government and supported by the Scottish Ambulance Service.

- 4.6 IMPACT ON STAFF - Absence rates remain stable and are in fact lower than average for the time of year. However anecdotal evidence would indicate an increasing gap caused by self-isolation and higher rates of transmission in the community as some services are beginning to feel the effect in the workforce of the dramatically rising covid figures.

Workforce wellbeing is however acknowledged to be more complex than simply monitoring absence rates. Activity is underway to investigate key indicators to measure wellness at work and to improve managerial and organisational targeted responses. In addition, critical skills and resources such as 1:1 and PPP (Personal Performance Plans) are being reviewed and refreshed as they are intrinsic to workforce wellbeing.

Wellbeing resources and support are regularly promoted to the workforce through multiple communication channels. Services are working well with the corporate wellbeing team to ensure resources reach all staff, including those not corporately networked. This is an ongoing task. There has been an increase in uptake of corporate wellbeing training and learning opportunities. The trial Workforce Peer Support Group has been successful and now meets regularly.

The importance of employee recognition has been highlighted throughout the pandemic and although the majority of employees feel recognised, according to a recent survey there is always room for improvement. The workforce is currently being asked their views on how they are recognised and how well they are recognised. The results as well as the outputs from the resulting focus groups will be taken forward in the form of a proposed package of improvements to employee recognition.

The workforce has returned to post following the pandemic mobilization although remains ready to deploy to critical areas of service delivery should the need arise. Work is underway to learn lessons from our experience of how Aberdeenshire Council utilised and mobilised its workforce during the term of the pandemic. HR are working with services to review the winter resilience of the workforce and how to mitigate the impact of covid isolation periods in particular sectors such as Education, Care and Infrastructure. Currently services are reviewing the health of their relief pools and ability to create additional capacity in their workforces, e.g. agencies and overtime.

Although all current indicators suggest that the workforce is well, prior to summer break there were informal indications through managerial and trade union conversations that the workforce was fatigued. Managers have been encouraged to message the workforce to ensure holidays, Time Off In Lieu and flexible working days are taken regularly. A recent analysis of BODET, the Council's time recording systems suggests that on average 68% of entitlement has been used across a sample of 2600 employees. Proportionately, 75% of annual leave entitlement should have been taken by September. Work will continue to promote the message to the workforce to take leave entitlement timeously.

- 4.7 EDUCATION - Schools returned for face-to-face learning for all pupils on Tuesday 17th August. The same Covid mitigations which were in place prior to

the summer holiday period will remain in place for at least the first six weeks of term and are subject to constant review nationally. There are also changes in relation to the requirement to self-isolate. Prior to the summer holidays, whole classes were often required to self-isolate for 10 days if a positive Covid case had been identified in a class which led to significant disruption to learning and to some schools and early learning centres having to close. From the start of this new academic session, only immediate close contacts will be contacted and will be required to take a PCR test. Upon receipt of a negative PCR result, they can return to school. Children under the age of five are exempt from having to take a PCR test.

Staff and secondary school pupils are still encouraged to undertake regular LFD testing and Aberdeenshire pupils and staff have taken this very seriously with testing rates in Aberdeenshire regularly among some of the highest in the country. The first few weeks of term have seen a significant increase in the number of positive Covid cases in schools, as a result of community transition, which is leading to significant absence in some school settings and disruption to learning and teaching.

- 4.8 USE OF OFFICES – Having previously reported the ambition to capture the benefits realized during the pandemic of a shift to virtual working and in the knowledge that our workforce who traditionally were office-based are supportive of a hybrid model going forward, Officers have been focusing on the Virtual Working Environment project. This project seeks to embed the concept of a Virtual Working Environment for our whole workforce and the changes that this will mean for the office estate amongst other things. Staff welfare and wellbeing is a key element of the project as the transition to new ways of working continues.

The Virtual Working Environment is defined as the places our employees work from using digital means of participation whether that be from their own home, or within council provided spaces or other places they chose to work from that aren't provided and maintained by the Council.

Aside from our office estate, this can be our schools, leisure facilities, care homes, family centres, and depots. We are making clear that, accepting the requirement to deliver some services and activities from particular locations, our approach to a virtual working environment is not exclusive to those who were previously office-based but it can apply to all of our workforce, and we will continue to explore the relevance of this for those outwith a traditional office workplace. Meantime, there is an inevitable need to address the use of existing office space to offer that part of our workforce who have been homeworking some certainty as to the planning for the future. New ways of working will involve different design and use of office space as well as technical and equipment suitable to support it; the behavioural and cultural change that sits alongside; and the policies, procedures and protocols that underpin the transition.

Our use of offices is likely to revolve more around the collaborative opportunities that feature within our ways of working. Our staff tell us that largely where they are required to work individually from a screen, they don't see the need to travel to a council office to do so. Where we anticipate needing space is for opportunities to meet with colleagues, interact with team mates, learn and do focused work together either one-to-one or in groups and teams. There will

remain the need for individual workstations for those who cannot work from home or for whom operationally there is a requirement to be based in an office, but the vision is of a demand on office space that requires a flip from our current ratio of 70% Individual and 30 % Collaborative to the office of the future which will be 30% Individual and 70% Collaborative. This will be a gradual phased transition.

The move beyond Level 0 and lifting of national restrictions on the use of offices that took place on 9th August has allowed the council to begin the first phase which involved desk allocations within the identified 12 council buildings that has enabled us to bring back the staff who most need to be in an office. A prioritized list of around 350 members of staff have been allocated desks in these buildings, all of whom have an identified need to be office-based, whether personal or operational, and a good number of these had been working in offices to varying degrees already throughout the pandemic.

Although social distancing restrictions have been lifted, council offices will continue to operate on the basis of two metre distancing for the meantime. This was comfortably achievable in terms of capacity and has allowed us to mirror the NHS requirements bearing in mind HSCP staff span both organisations. It also enables strong role-modelling of a gradual approach that is cogniscent of the still concerning rate of transmission of the virus, the potential for the need for future outbreak control, and fulfilling our health & safety obligations as an employer to mitigate against the spread of the virus in our workplaces.

The next phase of transition will be to an experimental stage, and we will make that change when it is possible to reduce to nil physical distancing. Our experimental stage will allow us to try out new and different options for collaboration workspace that will inform later phases when more permanent design features can be incorporated based on experience.

The 12 offices that are open are:

Woodhill House; 45 Station Road, Banchory; 25 Gordon Street, Huntly; Banff Town House; Seafield House, Banff; St Leonards, Banff; Neil Ross Square, Ellon; The Faithlie Centre, Fraserburgh; 14-16 Saltoun Square, Fraserburgh; Gordon House, Inverurie; Buchan House, Peterhead; Viewmount, Stonehaven.

The impact for local democracy and the formal meetings of the council involving elected members is being dealt with separately in a report proposing a choice-based blended model of Fully Virtual & Hybrid meetings to this meeting of Full Council.

- 4.9 RECOVERY – During the period when we have been “Living with COVID-19” the focus of activity centered primarily around Incident Recovery (bringing back services; supporting businesses; encouraging community resilience; controlling finances) and coming out of various phases of lockdown/periods of restriction. Despite the opening up of services and activity, there remains a significant effort ahead to continue to suppress the virus and deal with it as a feature of our ongoing way of life likely for some time to come, even with mass vaccination. The balance between response and recovery continues to favour the latter. The Recovery Strategy agreed by Full Council in July of last year has supported us to

move toward a Recovery Programme which will be the subject of a separate report to the next meeting of Full Council.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 All six of the Council's priorities are engaged in this report as the response to the pandemic reaches all parts of society and all parts of the Council's activities.

5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial			x
Staffing			x
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			x
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			x
Climate Change and Sustainability			x
Health and Wellbeing			x
Town Centre First			x

5.3 An integrated impact assessment is not required because Full Council is being asked to consider and note the update on the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This report will not therefore have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics. Any future reports requiring substantive decisions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic will be subject to equality impact assessments where required.

5.4 There are no staffing or financial implications directly arising from the recommendations in this report. The staffing impacts of the pandemic are reflected in the body of the report and the financial impact of actions taken to date in response to the COVID-19 pandemic will be reported to Full Council in due course as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. In addition to this, significant financial resources were distributed from the Scottish Government to the Council in order to support local businesses, the self-employed and residents. The Council's response requires resources and appropriate governance in order to manage these public funds appropriately whilst issuing them promptly. In order to ensure that the Council's overall financial position is supported through this pandemic, dialogue continues with the Scottish Government to secure not only resources but also the assurance that additional expenditure will be covered. All expenditure and lost income related to the COVID-19 pandemic is being captured and collated to establish the direct financial implications. This information will be shared with Council and will also be included in a regular return to the Scottish Government.

5.5 There is no direct impact on sustainability arising from the recommendations in this report. However, there has been a positive impact on sustainability through the increase in Council officers working from home and the move to remote

Committee meetings, the outcome of which has been a subsequent reduction in business travel across the local authority area. Reduced access to Council buildings has also resulted in increased use of electronic documents where it has not been possible to obtain a paper copy.

5.6 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a [Corporate Level](#):

- **ACORP001 – Budget Pressures**
- **ACORP002– Changes in government policy, legislation, and regulation**
- **ACORP003 – Workforce**
- **ACORP004 – Business and Organisational Transformation**
- **ACORP005 – Working with other Organisations**
- **ACORP006 – Reputation Management**
- **ACORP007 – Social Risk**
- **ACORP009 – Operational Risk Management (including Health and Safety)**
- **ACORP010 – Environmental Challenges**

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and The Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 Full Council is able to consider this item in terms of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the response to the pandemic applies to all of the Council's activities and the matter under consideration is not therefore delegated to any of the Council's appointed Committees. Where substantive decisions are required as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic these will be reported to the relevant Committee, or to Full Council where appropriate.
- 6.3 In terms of Section C.2.4 of the List of Officer Powers in Part 2B of the Scheme of Governance the Chief Executive has the delegated power to implement the provisions of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Contingency Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2005.

Jim Savege
Chief Executive
9th September 2021

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Timeline and Key Milestones of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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2020

Quarter 1	01/01/20 to 31/03/20	No update.
Quarter 2	01/04/20 to 30/06/20	
Quarter 3	01/07/20 to 30/09/20	
Quarter 4	01/10/20 to 31/12/20	

2021

Quarter 1	01/01/21 to 31/03/21
Quarter 2	01/04/21 to 30/06/21

6 April – Scottish Government announce that the majority of pupils are to return to school full time following the easter break. Children who are on the shielding list have been advised to stay at home until the 26th of April, in line with the Chief Medical Officer's advice. This follows the national expansion of lateral flow testing, with twice weekly tests being made available to all school staff and secondary school pupils. The strict 2m physical distancing between pupils within secondary schools is to be removed with the schools being tasked to consider other mitigations. The Chief Statistician releases figures in terms of the uptake of funding up until February 2021, from the Scottish Welfare Fund, The Self-Isolation Support Grant and the Discretionary Housing Payments.

13 April – Scottish Government announces accelerated easing of restrictions. Travel within Scotland for outdoor socialising, recreation and exercise will be allowed from the 16th April. People must continue to Stay Local for other purposes such as non-essential shopping and also public transport capacity will continue to be limited. Outdoor meetings in groups of up to 6 adults from up to 6 households will be allowed, with under 12's not counting towards the limit. Socialising in homes is still not permitted at this stage. Should data permit, it is proposed that the whole of Scotland will enter Level 3 from the 26th of April, meaning:

- non-essential travel between Scotland, England and Wales will be permitted, tourist accommodation can reopen subject to certain rules,
- shops will be able to fully reopen with precautions in place including physical distancing requirements, face masks and hand sanitiser in place,
- gyms and indoor sports facilities (incl. swimming pools), will reopen for individual exercise, with group activities permitted for under-18's, and all organised outdoor activity can resume except adult contact sport,
- limits on attendance at life events, including weddings, civil partnerships, funerals and receptions for those will increase to 50, with alcohol permitted,
- pubs, cafes and restaurants will reopen outdoors for groups of up to 6 people from up to 6 households with alcohol being allowed in line with local licensing policy,

and indoors for groups of up to 6 people from up to 2 households without alcohol until 20.00 hrs,

- takeaways will be able to resume normal service, with physical distancing and face masks in premises,
- mobile close contact services such as hairdressers, barbers and beauty salons can resume,
- non-essential work in other people's homes will resume.

Further reviews will take place to consider travel arrangements with the rest of the Common Travel Area as well as Northern Ireland ahead of the lifting of restrictions on 26th of April. An Updated Strategic Framework Protection Level Table is published showing the route map for future easings (these include new limits on attendance at public events from Level 2 and below). Self-assessment guidance is to be published to assist and enable businesses to calculate the specific capacity limits for their premises.

19 April – Travellers from India are to be subject to additional restrictions when arriving in Scotland from 04.00 on The 23rd of April.

20 April – Scottish Government announce all parts of the country will move to Level 3 from Monday 26th of April. Hospitality venues such as café's, pubs and restaurants can reopen, along with tourist accommodation.

25 April – Scottish Government announce free lateral flow test kits to be available for anyone without symptoms from Monday the 26th of April.

14 May – The World Health Organisation classifies the COVID-19 B.1.617 mutation first found in India, as a variant of concern. The Scottish Government announce most of mainland Scotland will move to Level 2 from the 17th of May, with eased restrictions on hospitality, entertainment, education and sport. This is with the exception of Glasgow and Moray who will remain in Level 3 from the 17th of May due to high rates of COVID-19, travel to and from these areas is prohibited other than for permitted purposes. Most islands move to Level 1. The number of people and households that can meet inside homes in Level 2 has been increased to 6 people from 3 households. From the 17th of May, anyone entering Scotland from countries on a new international 'Green List' will not be required to quarantine on arrival but will have to take a PCR test for COVID-19.

15 May – Scottish Government announce Scotland's vaccination roll-out has reached two thirds of the eligible population.

18 May – Scottish Government – John Swinney is appointed as Cabinet Secretary for COVID Recovery.

19 May – Scottish Government launches the COVID-19 vaccination status scheme. This service will provide confirmation of vaccination when required for foreign travel.

21 May – Scottish Government announce Moray is to move to Level 2 from midnight on the 21st of May. Glasgow is to remain at Level 3.

22 May – Scottish Government donate 100 oxygen concentrators and 40 continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) ventilators to the Indian Government to support its fight against COVID-19.

26 May – Scottish Government announce £3 million Destination and Sector Marketing Fund for tourism organisations to promote key visitor destinations in a responsible and sustainable way. Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) approves the one-dose Janssen COVID-19 vaccine for use in the UK.

1 June – Scottish Government announce Glasgow will move to Level 2 on the 5th of June, while 15 mainland Local Authorities will move to Level 1 (includes Aberdeenshire). All Islands currently in Level 1 will move to Level 0 at the same time due to sustained low numbers of cases.

2 June – Scottish Government announce £12 million of funding for business in Level 2 areas – including those in hospitality, events, weddings and soft plat sectors, additional funding for taxis and operators and £25 million to support the culture sector.

3 June – Scottish Government announce Education Scotland and the SQA will be reformed as part of Scotland’s education recovery plans. They also announce £1 million funding to support legal aid and trainees. It is announced that Portugal will be placed on the amber travel list.

4 June – Scottish Government announce £1 million support for Armed Forces charities. Professor Julie Fitzpatrick OBE is appointed as the Scottish Government’s next Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA). Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) approves the Pfizer / BioNTech vaccine for use in 12-15 year olds. International Health Ministers from the G7 have committed to a new international agreement making it easier and quicker to share results from vaccine and therapeutic trials to tackle COVID-19 and prevent future health threats.

9 June – Scottish Government announce rapid tests kits to be rolled out to community pharmacies from the 9th of June.

10 June – It is announced that additional funding of up to £5 million pounds is to be made available to NHS dentists to help remobilise services as Scotland recovers from the coronavirus pandemic aimed at helping them to meet safety standards and see more patients.

11 June – Scottish Government announce the expansion of the national vaccination programme to include international states.

13 June – Scottish Government announce £20 million of additional funding for students impacted by COVID-19. The second vaccine doses are brought forward for over 40's to help combat the Delta variant. It is announced that rapid lateral flow test kits will be mailed from tomorrow to all visitors to the UEFA Euro 2000 Fan Zone at Glasgow Green to encourage testing. This will include contacting 17,000 ticket holders. In addition, a mobile testing bus is to be situated at Glasgow Green to provide on-site lateral flow testing.

15 June – First Minister confirms that there will be no changes this week in terms of the COVID levels of protection that currently apply to different parts of country. It is announced that given the increase in cases and the impact of the new Delta variant that it is unlikely that any part of the country will move down a level from the 28th of June (*the date when it was hoped that the whole country would be moving to Level 0*) and that the easing of restrictions is likely to be paused for a further 3 weeks to allow the vaccination programme to press ahead as quickly as possible (and in particular with the delivery of second doses (*movement from 12 week cycle between vaccinations to 8 week cycle*)), this decision however is still to be made and will be confirmed next week following a full review. It is also announced that next week two pieces of work will be published next week, one of which, will detail what life will look like beyond Level 0, and, the second of which will provide the outcome in terms of the review of physical distancing and the impact of the new delta variant in terms of greater transmissibility.

16 June – Scottish Government announce £20 million for the second phase of the National Transition Training Fund (NTTF). It is also announced that a further £90,000 is to be provided to support women involved in prostitution who have been affected by the pandemic.

17 June – Scottish Government announce that despite unprecedented challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic the Scottish Budget was balanced last year. The 2020-21 Provisional Budget Outrun shows 99% of the £48 billion budget was spent and the remaining 1% will be carried over to 2021-22 to help support pandemic recovery.

18 June – The Scottish Government announce that due to a rise in the prevalence of the Delta variant cases travel restrictions are to be placed on both Manchester and Salford. The new rules on travel between Scotland and these cities comes into effect on Monday (21st of June). This is part of wider measures put in place to prevent variants of concern being brought into Scotland from areas with high cases of the COVID-19 Delta variant. A six-month extension of emergency measures granted under the Scottish Coronavirus Acts is to be debated in parliament next week following today's introduction of The Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Bill. It is announced that the first vaccine doses have been booked in for all adults ahead of schedule prior to the end of next week, 5 weeks ahead of the previous target of the 31st of July.

22 June – The First Minister announces a new indicative date for the whole of Scotland to move to level 0 with this being set for the 19th of July 2021, provided all necessary vaccination and harm reduction measures are met. Subject to confirmation a further indicative date for the lifting of all major COVID-19 restrictions is put in place for the 9th of August 2021.

23 June – The Scottish Parliament’s COVID-19 Recovery Committee meets for the first time.

24 June – The Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry) (Scotland) Bill is passed by the Scottish Parliament at Stage 3. The UK Government announce findings from an English study which shows over a third of people who have had COVID-19 reported symptoms lasting at least 12 weeks suggesting the prevalence of ‘long COVID’ increases with age.

27 June – The Scottish Government announce the opening of a self-registration portal for all over 18’s. They also announce an £8 million funding package for health and social care workforce wellbeing.

29 June – The Scottish Government announce that the travel restrictions in respect of Manchester, Salford and Bolton are to be lifted from 30th of June 2021.

30 June – The Scottish Government announce that social care personal assistants are to receive a £500 payment. The JCVI issues interim advice on COVID-19 booster vaccinations stating that any potential booster programme should be offered in 2 stages from September 2021, starting with those who are at most risk of serious disease.

Quarter 3 01/07/21 to 30/09/21 (Updated Until 10/09/21)

2 July – The Scottish Government announce that all mainland Health Boards will offer drop-in Coronavirus Vaccination Clinics from the 5th of July 2021. They also announce £380 million of additional funding to help Health Boards with pandemic costs.

3 July – The Scottish Government announce that Test and Protect will prioritise high risk cases with SMS text messages being used more extensively for low-risk index cases and direct telephone calls for those deemed to be of a high risk.

7 July – The Scottish Government announce the lifting of the travel restrictions to Blackburn.

9 July – The Scottish Government announce the deployment of additional staff to bolster Test and Protect.

13 July – The First Minister announces that all of Scotland will move to Protection Level 0 from the 19th of July 2021. Physical distancing will reduce to 1 metre in all indoor public settings and outdoors, informal social gatherings of up to 15 people from 15 households will be permitted outdoors without physical distancing. Mandatory face coverings will remain in place.

17 July – Scottish Government announce fully vaccinated travellers returning to Scotland from France will be required to self-isolate from Monday the 19th of July.

18 July – Scottish Government announce the vaccination programme will complete first doses for all over 18's who have attended their scheduled appointments by close of play on the 18th of July. The second doses for individuals continue to be scheduled and it is expected all adults will have received them by the 12th of September.

19 July – JCVI issues advice on the vaccination of children and young people. Children who are at increased risk of serious COVID 19 disease should be offered the Pfizer vaccine. That includes children aged 12 to 15 with severe neurodisabilities, down's syndrome, immunosuppression and multiple or severe learning disabilities.

23 July – Scottish Government announce changes to self-isolation rules for close contacts of COVID-19 cases with essential staff in critical roles being allowed to return to work to maintain lifeline services and critical national infrastructure.

28 July – Scottish Government announce that fully vaccinated people from the EU and US will be able to travel to Scotland without quarantining from the 2nd of August.

29 July – Scottish Government announce £11.5 million funding to reduce waiting times as part of NHS remobilisation efforts. They also announce nine projects supporting carers and disabled people will share £1 million to tackle loneliness and isolation as a result of the pandemic.

1 August – Scottish Government announce children and young people aged 12-17 from key groups will be offered COVID-19 vaccine.

3 August – First Minister announces Scotland to move beyond Level 0 on the 9th of August. The legal requirement for physical distancing and limits on gatherings will be removed. Some protective measures will however remain such as the use of face coverings indoors and the collection of contact details as part of Test and Protect.

4 August – Scottish Government announce all young people 16 to 17 years of age in Scotland will be offered the COVID-19 vaccine from the 6th of August.

7 August – Scottish Government announce that the two metre physical distancing will remain in place at health care settings across Scotland from the 9th of August when restrictions are to be lifted elsewhere.

12 August – The First Minister and representatives from Scotland's Trade Unions led by the STUC General Secretary meet to discuss the key issues affecting workers as Scotland recovers from the coronavirus pandemic.

17 August – Scottish Government launches consultation on Scotland's recovery. This sets out a range of proposal which include whether or not some of the temporary provisions made under the Scottish and UK wide coronavirus legislation should be maintained after March 2022. The MHRA approve the use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for children and young persons aged 12 to 17.

21 August – Scottish Government announce that a multi-million pound package of support has been invested to help tourism and hospitality businesses recover from the coronavirus pandemic. The Chief Medical Officer urges pregnant women to get vaccinated.

22 August – UK Government launch UK wide antibody surveillance programme for the general public. Individuals may opt into this service through NHS Track and Trace with home anti-body tests being made available for up to 8,000 people per day.

23 August – UK Government sign a deal with Pfizer / BioNTech securing 35 million vaccines which will be delivered in the second half of 2022. The Scottish Government launch a touring fund for live music (£750,000).

24 August – Scottish Government invites views on the draft aims and principles of an independent public inquiry regarding their handling of the coronavirus pandemic. The Scottish Government urges people who test positive for COVID-19 to securely list details of their close contacts online when asked by Test and Protect.

25 August – Scottish Government announce £14 million North East Recovery and Skills Fund. This funding will provide opportunities for more than 3,000 individuals in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire through training and enterprise projects across various sectors including entrepreneurship, tourism and energy. The Scottish Government publish the NHS Recovery Plan which sets out the key actions for the next 5 years to help increase capacity by at least 10% and help address backlogs.

26 August – Scottish Government announce Canada and the Azores will be added to the green list for travel. The expanded list also includes Denmark and Switzerland. Thailand joins the red list for travel.

29 August – Scottish Government urge all under 40's to get their second dose of vaccination.

1 September – Scottish Government announce proposals which would require individuals to hold a Coronavirus Vaccination Certificate in order to enter certain events and high risk venues (e.g. nightclubs, festivals and football grounds). These proposals are scheduled to be put before the Scottish Parliament and voted on during the week commencing the 6th of September. QR Digital Vaccination Certificates for international travel will be available from the 3rd of September. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation ('JCVI') publish guidance advising that individuals who were severely immunosuppressed at the time of their first or second dose of the vaccine should be offered a third dose.