

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport

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Dear Lewis

Enhancements to information published by Public Health Scotland on Covid

I am writing to make the committee aware that Public Health Scotland will, today, be making a number of improvements to the data they make available each day. These updates will enhance and add to the existing dashboard published on the Public Health Scotland website here: <https://publichealthscotland.scot/covid19data>.

To support public awareness and choice, a new seven-day monitoring section of the dashboard will present data at local authority level. Drawing on neighbourhood (intermediate zone) data it will colour code local authority areas based on the proportion of neighbourhoods which exceed 55 confirmed cases per 100,000 over a seven-day period. It should be noted that this threshold has been selected to most effectively display a summary of confirmed cases within Local Authority areas and does not have any other significance in this context or imply that local interventions, such as targeted lockdowns, are imminent.

In addition to this new dashboard, Public Health Scotland are also enhancing the Coronavirus content that they make available to the public. Currently, PHS produce a static dashboard that shows:

- A daily and cumulative count of positive cases (by specimen date)
- A cumulative count of COVID-19 deaths (those within 28 days of a lab positive test).
- Health board and local authority breakdowns of cumulative positive cases.

In response to feedback, Public Health Scotland will be enhancing these dashboards to improve the presentation and content to provide. This new content will show:

- Health board and local authority breakdowns of the cumulative HPS deaths data (deaths within 28 days of a lab positive test, currently 2,491 at 27th July) including death rates per 100,000.

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- A summary of the cumulative HPS deaths data by SIMD quintile at Scotland level only.
- An age and sex breakdown of the cumulative positive cases at Scotland level only
- A summary of the cumulative positive cases by SIMD quintile at Scotland level only.
- Breakdowns of cases by age and sex at Scotland level, and filters for age group and sex can be applied simultaneously. For example, a user could filter to find the number of positive cases in females aged 45-64 with a test specimen date of 29th February
- Data on positive and negative cases by specimen date. Available as daily, cumulative, daily and cumulative percentage and crude rates per 100,000.

These improvements will also be supported by additional context about how the information should be used, including the importance of avoiding complacency if there are a low number of cases in an area and links to public health advice.

I hope the committee welcome these developments as Public Health Scotland continue to work to enhance the information available to the public.

I am copying this letter to Alison Evison, CoSLA President and Jim Savege, SOLACE Chair.

JEANE FREEMAN