

COVID-19 Recovery Committee

4th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Thursday, 3 February 2022

SPICe: issues paper

This note highlights some issues Members may wish to take account of when the Cabinet Secretary speaks to the committee.

A timeline of recent activity

Some of the most recent key announcements and activities are set out below:

18 January

- Scottish Government announce [children aged five to 11 years old with specific medical conditions will start receiving invitations for their first Covid-19 vaccination.](#)
- Scottish Government announce [restrictions including one metre physical distancing in hospitality and leisure settings, table service in hospitality venues and attendance limits at indoor events will be removed](#) from Monday 24 January. Non-professional indoor contact sports will also resume.

20 January

- Scottish Government issue [new guidance for care home operators](#), reducing and removing isolation periods for care home residents

21 January

- Omicron sub-lineage BA.2 is [designated a Variant Under Investigation \(VUI\)](#) by the UK Health Security Agency (HSA).
- [UKHSA also publishes analysis](#) which shows the majority of ICU admissions between 24 November 2021 and 19 January 2022 were Delta infections.

23 January

- The Scottish Government's voluntary 'Distance Aware' scheme is launched, which offers badges and lanyards to people who wish to show others they would welcome additional space and extra care while out in public.

24 January

- Fully vaccinated arrivals into Scotland will no longer be required to possess a negative test result from 4am on 11 February. Non-vaccinated arrivals will still be required to take pre-departure tests and a PCR test on or before day two – but the requirement for isolation will end – and they will no longer have to take a day eight test.

25 January

- Scottish Government announce that from Monday 31 January businesses can resume hybrid working arrangements.

26 January

- The Scottish Government's monthly GDP estimates for November 2021 show Scotland's economy to be 0.6% higher than in February 2020, before the main economic impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) began to be felt. This is the first time Scotland's GDP has been recorded as higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Possible issues to discuss

- **Modelling** - the Scottish Government's **most recent understanding and modelling of the Omicron variant**, for example on transmission, health outcomes, vaccine effectiveness, and prevalence within Scotland and **implications of this** on hospital admissions, ICU admissions and deaths. And reflections on how this compares to projections from previous modelling (see separate paper)
- **Omicron sub-lineage BA.2** – how prevalent is the new variant in Scotland, what are the implications and how concerned is the Scottish Government?
- **NHS and wider workforce pressures** – Scottish Government's assessment of current and forthcoming pressures on public services, due to Covid related absences, including health, police, fire and education. (see separate stats paper for figures on workforce absences)
- **Vaccine rollout** - progress, including in previously under vaccinated groups and areas; and what is future strategy for further boosters? (see stats paper for further details)

- **Hybrid working** – Scottish Government’s assessment of risks and benefits of people returning to work, and long term vision?
- **Vaccine certification** – the government’s thinking on the scheme, and possible next steps, including a formal review and evaluation?
- **Surveillance** – the FM said last week (25 Jan) that “The four UK Governments have agreed to work on a new surveillance system to identify any future variants of concern”
- **Ventilation** – progress in rollout of £25 million funding to deliver ventilation in businesses, and rollout of £10 million funding to schools (and “additional £5m of capital funding”; and SG assessment of quality of ventilation in different sectors in Scotland (eg education); and what is next.
- The government’s assessment of the **behavioural response**, and attitudes, of the Scottish public – for example in avoiding non-priority contact with others, mask wearing, testing and reporting results, isolating following a positive test, or working from home where possible ([latest attitudes data December 2021 from YouGov](#))
- Government thinking on the **forthcoming strategic framework**, as signalled by the FM – how will this differ from previous versions? Plans for consultation and evidence base?

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31 January 2022

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