



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

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Deputy First Minister / Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
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Dear Deputy First Minister,

I am writing to you about the reports that covid cases in Scotland have risen by more than 30% in the past week as well as the reports of new variants spreading and the related call for everyone over the age of 50 to be added to the vaccine booster programme. I have no doubt you will be aware of the latest figures from Public Health Scotland, but it is clear that they are a cause for concern, especially the news that the number of new Covid hospital admissions increased by 15.2% to 696 in the week ending 14 June.

We have heard reports that the two new identified omicron variants of concern may be behind these rises in cases and hospitalisations, and as such I am wondering what action the Scottish Government is taking to address this? Further to this, the strain BA.2.12.1 is reportedly spreading faster in Scotland than in the rest of the UK, does the Scottish Government have any information on why this appears to be the case?

With the numbers of covid cases rising, it is clear covid has not gone away. This is also worrying as the cases are rising as we head towards summer never mind what we may be facing come winter. With that in mind does the Scottish Government have contingency plans in place for the upcoming winter period in relation to a possible rise in covid cases/hospitalisations?

If we are to avoid a potential fourth wave, we know that we have to break the chain of transmissions, but with 1 in 30 Scots currently with covid that is looking increasingly difficult. What action is the Scottish Government planning to take to try and break this trend towards a new wave? I note there are reports from leading health experts to increase covid testing, does the Scottish Government support this view, and if so, what action is it considering taking to help with the affordability of test taking? Given the cost-of-living crisis, not everyone will have money to spare on purchasing covid tests, and as such I believe the government needs a plan to help address this.

Finally, public health expert Professor Linda Bauld has said that everyone over the age of 50 should be added to the vaccine booster programme. Will the Scottish Government commit to taking this proposal to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation? I believe the situation now warrants action to be taken as a matter of priority before the it spirals out of control, and I look forward to your response.

Kind regards,

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