



Northumberland
County Council

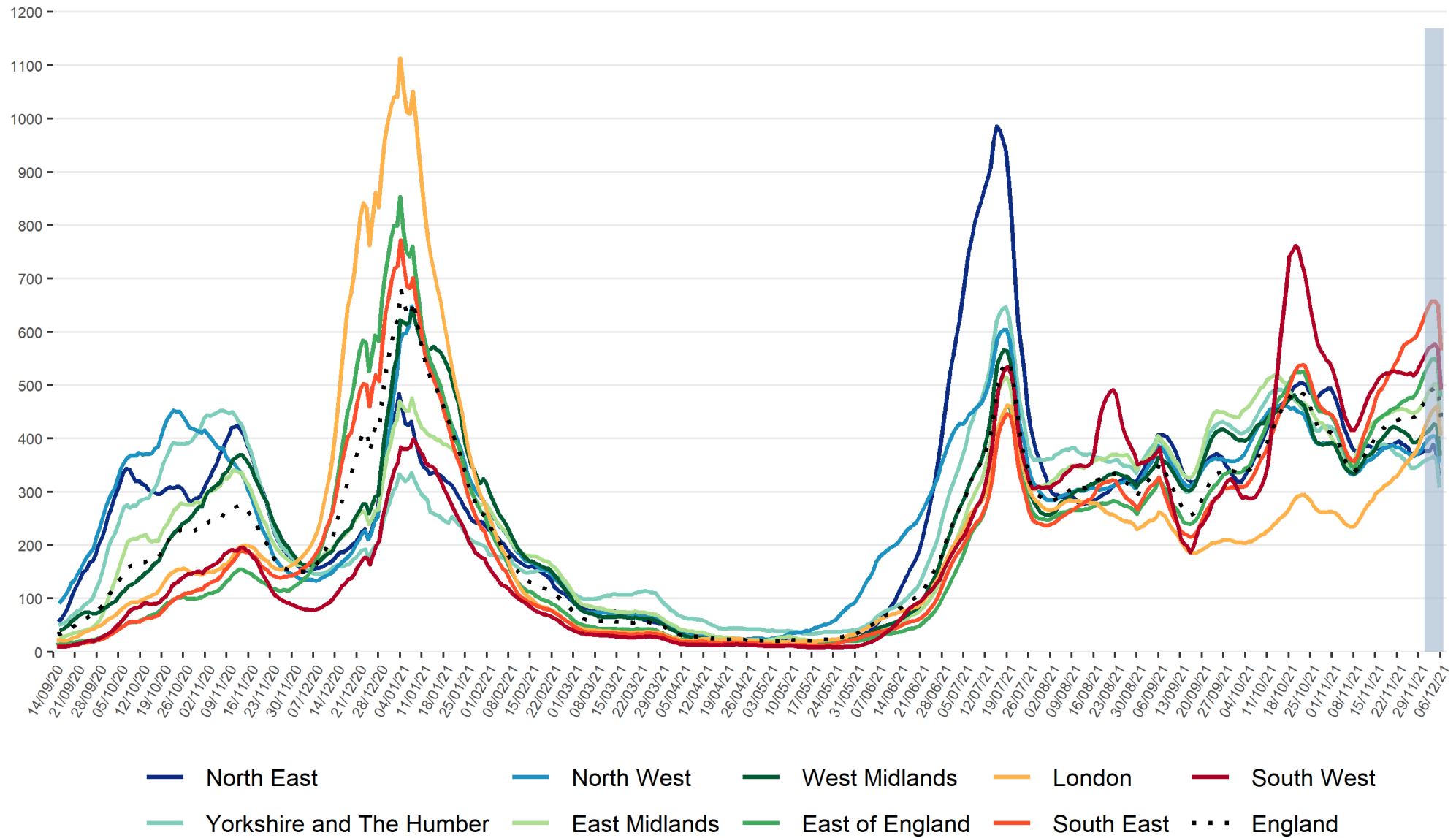
Covid 19 Public Health Update

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9th December 2021

www.northumberland.gov.uk

New positive cases as a 7 day rolling rate per 100,000 population (2019 estimates), by GO Region.
 Most recent days liable to change due to reporting delays. Includes results announced 07 Dec, 2021.



Weekly Change in Rate per 100,000 - week beginning

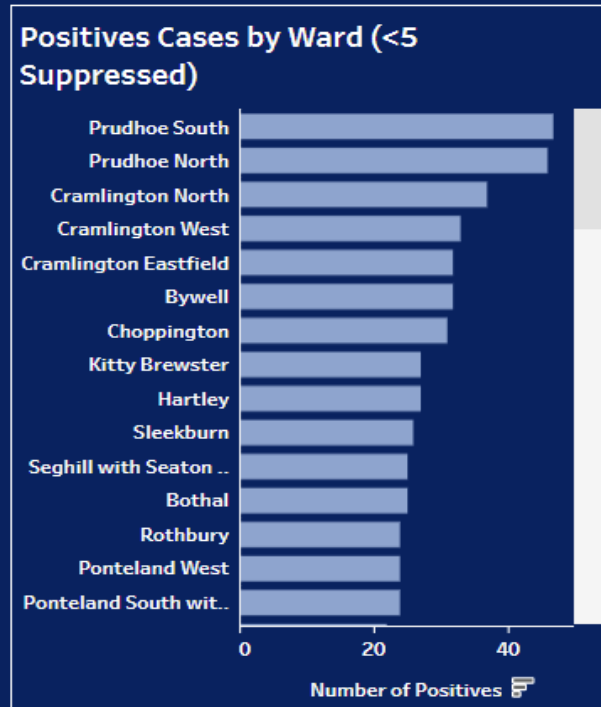
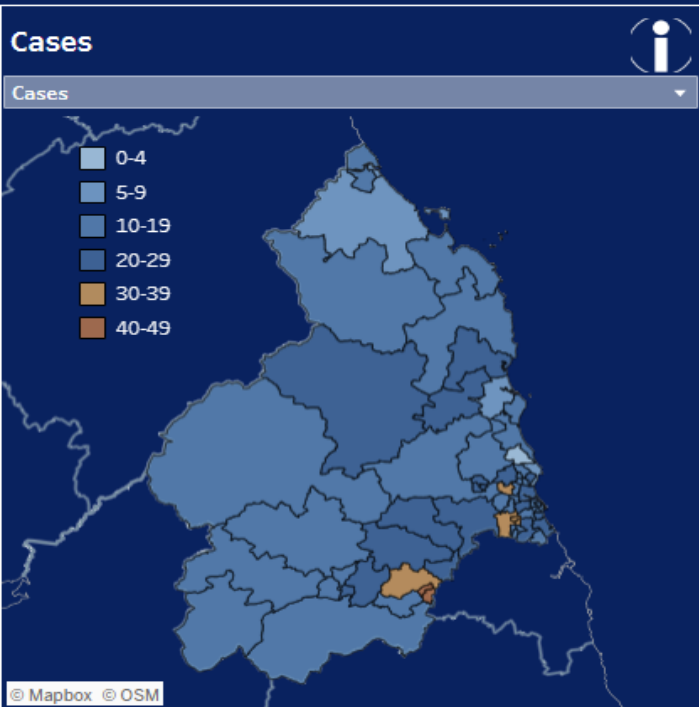
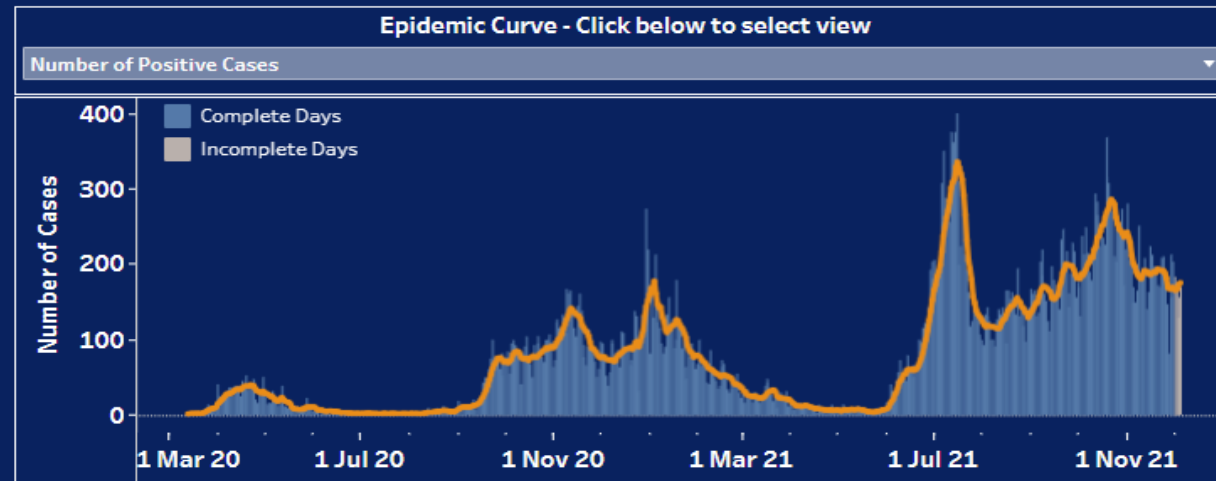
4 October 2021	11 October 2021	18 October 2021	25 October 2021	1 November 2021	8 November 2021	15 November 2021	22 November 2021	29 November 2021
448.71	543.20	603.42	512.94	407.94	410.41	417.52	360.08	378.30

Rate of Positive Cases per 100,000 - 29/11/2021 to 05/12/2021

378.3

New Confirmed Positive Cases - 29/11/2021 to 05/12/2021

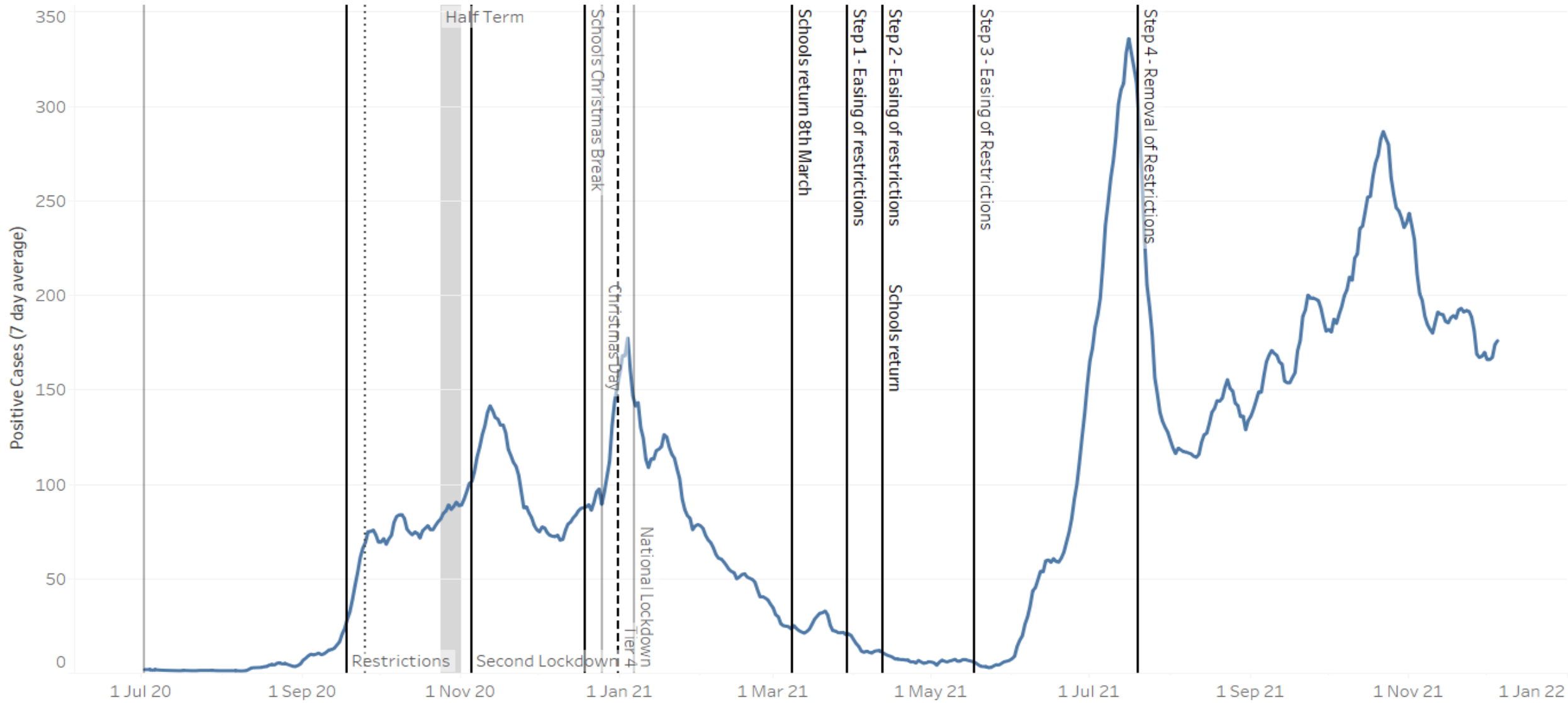
1,225



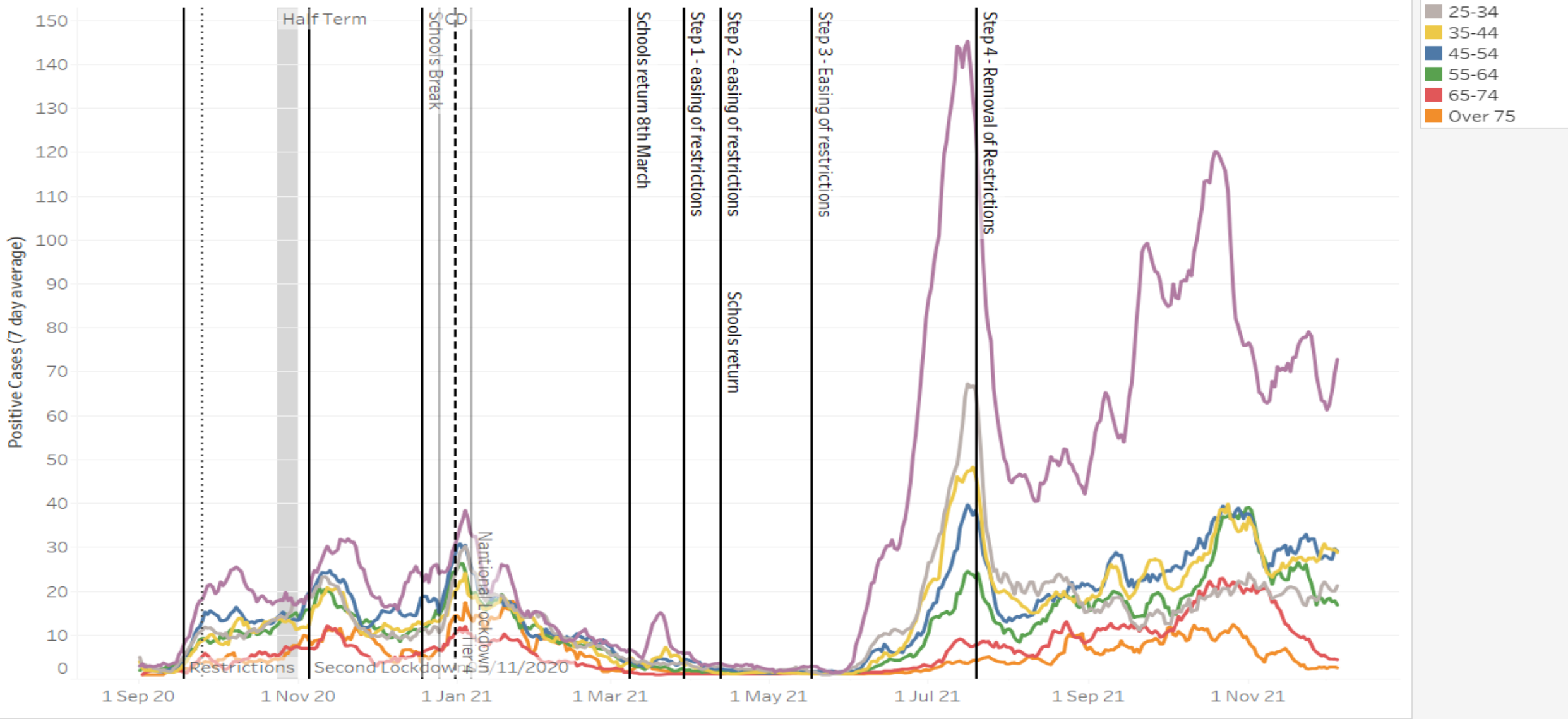
Daily Cases - This data is subject to change and cases will be added retrospectively on a daily basis

5 December 2021	170	▲
4 December 2021	128	▼
3 December 2021	155	▼
2 December 2021	174	▼
1 December 2021	182	▼
30 November 2021	203	▼
29 November 2021	213	

7 day average of cases in Northumberland

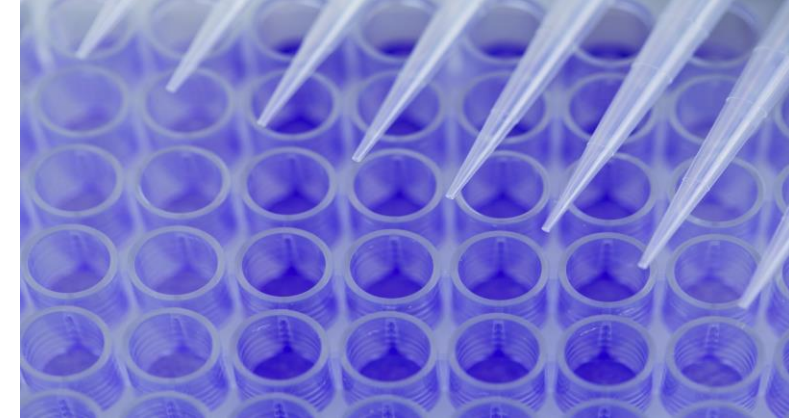


7 day average of cases in Northumberland by age bands



Community PCR testing for cases and contacts

- Good access across Northumberland
 - Highest rate of PCR testing in North East
- Local testing sites (LTS)
 - Approximately 50% of PCR testing in Northumberland (excluding hospital testing and asymptomatic testing programmes)
 - Fixed sites at Berwick, Ashington, Blyth and Hexham (rural north and west and urban south east)
- Regional testing site (RTS)
 - Newcastle Great Park (approx. 18% of community PCR testing for Northumberland)
- Mobile testing units (MTU)
 - Regular days at Alnwick, Morpeth and West Hartford (approx. 10% of community testing for Northumberland)
- Postal test kits
 - Remaining 22% of community PCR testing



Asymptomatic testing

- National setting based testing programmes
 - Rapid lateral flow +/- PCR for some settings
 - Care home residents and staff and some supported accommodation, schools
- Community lateral flow testing
 - Universal offer for all community – collect at pharmacies (most pharmacies in Northumberland enrolled – 2-3000 kits collected per week) or online order
 - Workplace LFD testing replaced by universal offer
 - Targeted community testing – distributed by NCC via arrangement with DHSC to underserved and vulnerable groups
- Challenges
 - Awaiting a national testing strategy (different programmes managed separately)
 - Awaiting details of funding after winter period (for PCR and asymptomatic programmes)
 - Risk that PCR capacity may be reduced (i.e. fewer LTS) which could reduce access
 - Limited evidence to demonstrate benefit of asymptomatic testing



Contact tracing

NHS Test and Trace is now part of UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)

- All cases have 4hrs to complete online contact tracing before being phoned
- Northumberland Local Tracing Partnership (LTP) with NHS Test and Trace
 - “Local 24” - Cases that cannot be contacted within 24 hours are passed to NCC
 - Contact tracing undertaken by NCC customer services staff supported by public health team
 - “Local 4” – Cases in most disadvantaged post codes in Northumberland (IMD 1 and 2)
Contact tracing by NCC after 4 hour online window
 - All contacts are followed up by National Team
- Aim is to provide local service (called from 01670 number) and can be referred directly to local support (e.g. NCT)



Contact tracing

- LTP receives around 50 cases per day (Local 4 and Local 24 combined)

Challenges

- Performance information
 - Performance data has only recently become available for LTPs
 - NCC performance is similar to other North East LAs (median time to completion)
 - NCC LTP to develop measures to understand quality and impact of local service
- Awaiting details of national strategy and funding after March 2021
 - Challenge of recruitment and retention of staff in absence of longer term plans
 - Uncertainty about expectations of local authorities after March 2022 regarding contact tracing
 - Uncertainty about future funding

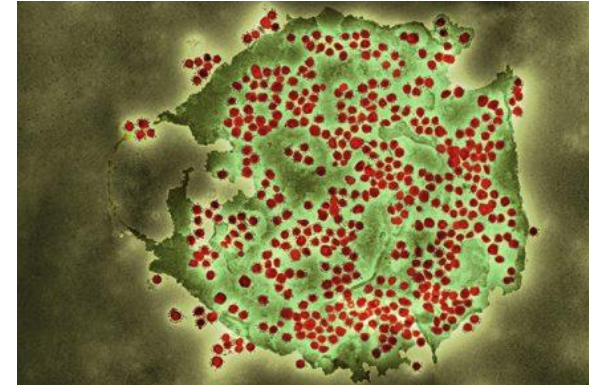


Variant of Concern (VoC) Omicron

- All viruses mutate over time and new variants emerge regularly.
- A variant is classified as ***of concern*** once there is evidence of a change that could lead to causing more harm eg transmissibility
- Scientists working to increase our knowledge on the effect of the Omicron variant on transmissibility, antibody response and vaccine efficacy and thereafter what impact the new variant might have on severe disease and mortality.
- The Prime Minister announced new temporary measures which have now come into force (review after 3 weeks):
 - to get vaccinated and have your booster jab when applicable; to continue to adhere to COVID-19 safe behaviours, including wearing face coverings in shops and on public transport (now mandatory); to use the NHS COVID-19 app, to meet outdoors where possible and if inside, to maintain ventilation. Stay at home if unwell to reduce the risk of passing on illness to others.
 - Every adult will be offered a booster by the end of January; the amount of time you must wait between your second and third jab will be cut from six to three months; and children between 12 and 15 can now have their second dose.
 - Face coverings are now compulsory in shops and on public transport. Pubs and restaurants are exempt, as are places of worship.
 - In addition, the Government is strongly advising that face coverings are worn in communal areas in all educational settings by adults and students in year 7 and above, unless they are exempt. This also applies to school transport.
 - A number of countries are now on the 'red list', which you can find [here](#).
 - People now travelling to the UK must take a test before their journey as well as a PCR test upon their return and isolate until they receive their negative result

Omicron - cases

- National confirmed numbers as of Tuesday 7th December - over 400
 - Not all linked to travel now indicating community transmission present
- In the first instance, all confirmed, or highly probable cases will be managed by the local UKHSA HPT and usually involve a local Incident Management Team (IMT).
- Management of confirmed, and suspected cases of Omicron
 - Isolate as per national guidance
- All close contacts of confirmed or suspected Omicron cases
 - Will be followed up and required to isolate for 10 days, irrespective of age or vaccination status as per the national guidance.
 - Contacts will be asked to undertake a PCR which will be sequenced to check variant
 - Additional actions may be advised by a local incident management team. This may include wider targeted PCR testing for case finding.



Road Map January to March 2022 – and beyond

- Maintain local Health Protection Board (HPB)
 - Updating the local outbreak management plan (LOMP)
- Case rates?
- VoCs?
- Funding?
- Testing?
- Workforce capacity?



Be cautious

- 'Hands, Face, Space, Fresh air'
- Ventilation in enclosed spaces
- Get tested by PCR if you have any symptoms:
[nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or 119
- Regular asymptomatic testing by LFD where available
- Take up vaccination offer (safer than covid)
 - Flu jab as well as Covid (plus booster)

Be considerate

- Continue wearing a face covering indoors – particularly in crowded areas
 - Now mandated in education settings, shops and on public transport

Be kind

- Many people still feel anxious about changes to restrictions; others may still want to distance and wear face coverings

