

SBAR on Test & Protect Programme

The purpose of this SBAR is to update the Board of the progress being made in the Test & Protect Service in line with the requirements set out by Scottish Government.

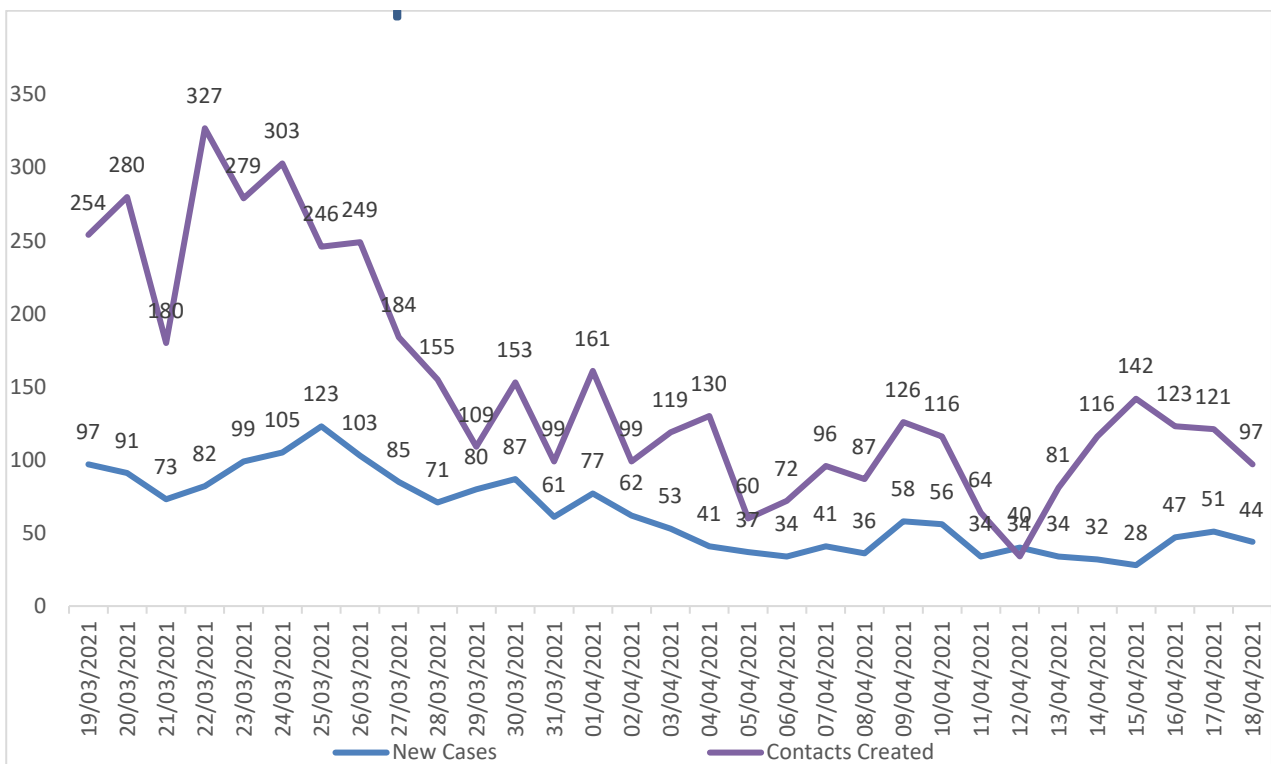
Situation

The NHS Lanarkshire Test & Protect (Covid 19 contact tracing) service continues to provide the service 8am-8pm, 365 days per year.

While to date, the service has approximately 39500 case records contact traced on the case management system (CMS) from 15th July 2020 until 18th April 2021, overall the recent trend in cases has been steadily falling but recent evidence shows levelling off of this deceleration and plateauing of case numbers. The consensus is that this levelling off is likely due to increased efforts for case finding through expanding testing capacity and access – PCR and LFD test kits.

Positive Cases (last month)

The chart below shows the distribution of new NHS Lanarkshire positive cases and their contacts for the past month from 19/03/21 until 18/04/21.



Background

NHSL has undertaken a substantial recruitment programme in order to meet its workforce requirements. The following table describes the current staffing position.

Post	(Number) & WTE in post	Comment
B3 Contact Tracer	(113) 81.92	Contracted until March 2022
B3 Contact Tracer (Council)	(19) 15.2	Secondment extended from 31/03/2021 to 30/06/2021
Contact Tracer (borrowed from other NHSL services)	(7) 5.83	
B5 Team Leader	(14) 12.9	1 of who is covering maternity leave of 1 B7 Service Manager
B5 Data Analyst	(1) 1	Contracted until March 2022
B6 Investigating Officers	(12) 10.1	1 (0.8wte) of those currently in post is on maternity leave. 1(1wte) starting in post 26/4/2021
B7 Service Manager	(2) 2	Contracted until March 2022
B3 Admin Assistant	(1) 1	Contracted until March 2022
Band 3 admin assistant	(3) 1.2	Contracted until June 2021 to support National Notification Service

Case Interview and Case Completion Rates

The average case interview completion rate inside 24 hours of notification on CMS is a measure of how quickly a contact tracer manages to interview the case, identify contacts and any events/settings of interest. Monthly average rates are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

September	74.0%
October	71.8%
November	91.2%
December	91.4%
January	95.2%
February	96.3%
Last 28 days, to March 18th	96.7%
March 19 th until April 18 th inclusive	95.9%

The average case completion rate inside 24 hours of notification on CMS is a measure of how quickly the wider team manage to complete all other investigative activity associated with a case before it can be closed off. See Table 3.

Table 3

September	53.4%
October	56.3%
November	84.4%
December	86.0%
January	91.7%
February (to 18/02)	92.0%
Last 28 days, to March 18th	92.7%
March 19 th until April 18 th inclusive	87.3%

Following the return, across Scotland on 1st February, to calling contacts of COVID-19 cases, the service has largely completed the process of making appropriate operational adjustments to seamlessly transition to this way of working. Also, as case numbers continue to stay low, we are progressing our work to develop our service to ensure it is well prepared for more challenging periods by improving the skills and knowledge of our contact tracers through training like suicide awareness courses, one-to-one support sessions where needed, identifying a consultant lead for training as well as quality management to facilitate audits, review of operating procedures and follow through on the identified changes and improvements.

ASSESSMENT

Future of the Test & Protect Workforce

Further to our previous report, the T&P team continues to strive to prepare for the immediate future and to improve its effectiveness through our quality management and training programme as well as the transition from current scripted case interview process to the more robust case investigation approach; the well proven approach used by the health protection team. Our Contact Tracers are continuing to explore with cases the 7-day period before they become infectious as distinct from the standard protocol of asking questions about 2 days from onset of symptoms or sample collection. Adopting the more detailed case investigation approach will allow us to better target and break the chains of other routes of transmission.

However, there remain the same risks ahead:

Community Asymptomatic testing – Scottish Government recently announced the introduction of twice weekly voluntary population testing using LFD test kits

Testing of close contacts – This has been very effective in identifying infection in close contacts, enabling us to find more positive cases quicker and isolate their contacts but it means the T&P is busier with more cases to contact trace.

Expansion of LFD tests to schools and workplaces – this is ongoing and while it results in a higher workload for Test & Protect, the assurance and peace of mind it provides to stakeholders in education we hope make it worthwhile.

Schools return - With schools starting back after Spring break, we expect to see a rise in cases. We will continue to work closely with colleagues in Education to ensure we have all relevant information to break the chains of transmission.

Easing of lockdown - We were already seeing limited compliance with restrictions on the lead up to restrictions lessening with the number of contacts per case continuing to

fluctuate but the trend appears to be a steady rise. With lockdown easing we expect to not only see a significant increase in number of close contacts that cases have but to also see a significant increase in case numbers and complexity of these cases as hospitality re-opens, community and hospital healthcare re-opens to address the waiting list of patients and workplaces resume onsite operations.

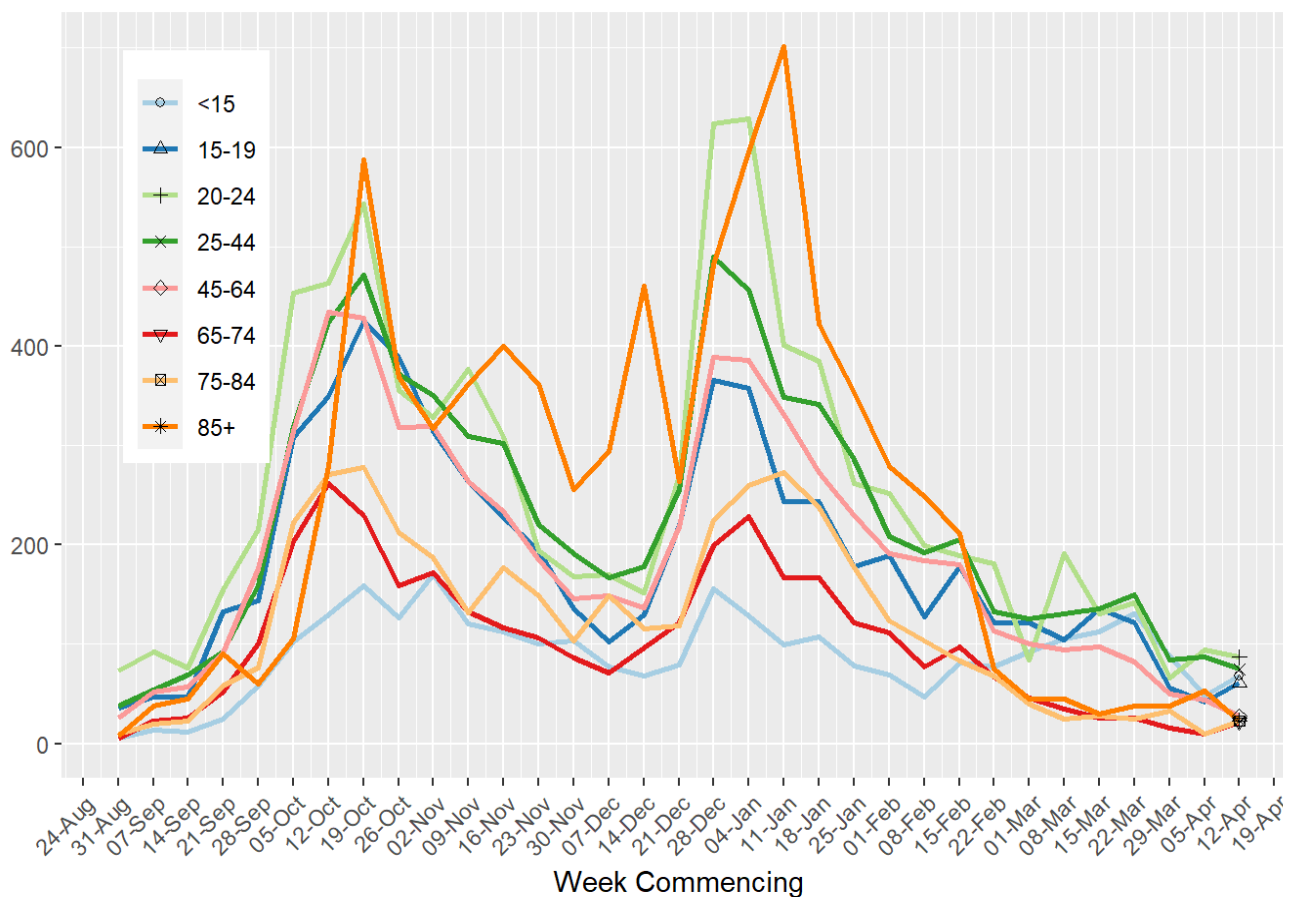
Age and Rate of Infection

Last month, while infection rates in other age groups had either plateaued or continued to decline, there had been a significant rise in the infection rate in under 15 year olds and a very steep rise in 20-24 year olds.

The first two weeks of April shows increasing infection rates in under 15 year olds, 15-19 year olds and 75-84 year olds although overall, case numbers have come down and seem to have plateaued this past 2 weeks, averaging 41 cases per day.

It is imperative we maintain a recruited, well-resourced Test & Protect Service capable of investigating and mitigating transmission.

Figure 15: Weekly Age Specific Covid Rates per 100,000



This is best case scenario and does not take into account re-interviews, debriefs or complex cases which add a considerable amount of time (Figures above are based on 7.5 hours contact tracing per CT per shift and basic, not enhanced contact tracing).

Two of our current Contact Tracing staff are on loan to HR and we have identified a member of staff to help with vaccine admin while numbers are low.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- note the fluctuating nature of demand on the service
- note the information provided which provides an overview of service delivery during the past month and a summary of the risks ahead
- continuing support for the resourcing of T&P service to maintain adequate capacity to deliver effective contact tracing across Lanarkshire

Sharon Falconer
Test & Protect Service Manager
20th April 2021