Scottish COVID-19 Data & Intelligence Network

AN OVERVIEW

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The Network

o The COVID-19 Route map – an indication of the order in which the Scottish Government will seek to change existing restrictions – highlights that to move through the phases set out 'any signs of resurgence are closely monitored as part of enhanced community surveillance'

o Following the World Health Organisation's recommendation for governments to 'use, adapt and strengthen existing surveillance systems' we are building on the data expertise and infrastructure that has been established in Scotland for many years

o The **Scottish COVID-19 Data and Intelligence Network** ensures that the public sector is provided with real-time intelligence to make rapid decisions that will drive down the number of COVID-19 cases and help Scotland to move through the roadmap

Who we are

o In April 2020, in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, a **data taskforce** led by Scottish Government was established to enable evidence-based policy and operational decisions by organisations in Scotland. The minutes from these meetings are available [here](#)

o Subsequently, in June 2020, the **COVID-19 Data & Intelligence Network** was established and incorporated members and goals of the data taskforce

o The new network is a partnership of expertise from across **local authorities**, **health boards**, **Directors of Public Health**, **Health and Social Care Partnerships**, **Public Health Scotland, Scottish Government, academia** and other **public bodies**

o Our aim is to ensure that the public sector is provided with real-time intelligence to make rapid decisions that will drive down the number of COVID-19 cases as different challenges arise over the longer term

Our vision

Our vision is to build a network that harnesses the power of data by building on the **existing community of data expertise and making best use of the data already available across Scotland** in order to minimise the spread of COVID-19. This will enable us to:

o Quickly identify COVID-19 resurgence, clusters, outbreaks and detecting co-circulation with winter respiratory viruses

o Protect vulnerable populations

o Evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on health, care and society

o Ensure public support through embedding transparency, trustworthiness and partnership as core principles

Transparency & privacy

The network enables rapid decision-making, while continuing to follow **tried and tested, safe and secure arrangements** to ensure privacy and ethical data use is maintained. This includes:

o Ensuring the network's activity is underpinned by a **valid legal basis**. You can read more here about some of the legislation, frameworks and guidance that are applicable to our work

o Using the Public Benefit and Privacy Panels to **scrutinise the use of data**

o Engaging with the Information Commissioner's Office to provide **reassurance about our approaches**

o **Establishing consistent values** with Open Government, operating to FAIR data principles, and within the constraints of data governance, contributing to make data more useable for all

o Working with data infrastructure delivery partners who will have the highest level of **UK accreditation standards** and to ensure privacy by design is embedded in our data solutions

How we operate

The network is operating in a rapidly evolving, complex landscape with multiple, fragmented datasets and key data gaps, with analytical resource & expertise distributed across multiple organisations. To try to mitigate these issues, we will:

o **Make data accessible** from health and social care, the wider public sector and research projects

o **Mobilise a network** of data intelligence expertise and capabilities across local authorities, health boards, DPHs, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Public Health Scotland, other public bodies, Scottish Government and academia

o **Engage with local delivery teams** to co-produce actionable insights, integrating activity across local resilience partnerships and the underpinning agencies to ensure sustainability

o **Inform policy making** in Scottish Government & **inform effective pandemic response** at national, local and sectoral levels

o **Establish data flows** with the UK Joint Biosecurity Centre and ONS for active surveillance and HDR UK that reports to SAGE for research and evaluation purposes

Priority challenges

The network's initial focus will be on delivering products that address **priority challenges** with products developed for both **operational** and **researcher users** with relevant safeguards in place. Some examples of these challenges include:

Who is at the greatest risk of harm as a result of the disruptive effects of COVID-19 on routine NHS and social care?	**Where** do we invest and promote healthier and more sustainable commuting options while protecting public safety?	**Where** are there outbreaks of COVID-19 across Scotland today?	**What** is the risk of COVID-19 infection across Scotland and how does this vary across different parts of the country?	**How** can we identify and support shielded people?

Which occupational groups are at a greater risk of developing COVID-19?	**How** do we support economic regeneration through transport and parking while also mitigating the risks of infection?	**How** do we create a business vulnerability model to help monitor and support the impact of COVID-19 on businesses?	**How** do we categorise risk in different parts of the country?

Our products

In response to new challenges from operational users and researchers, the network will continue to rapidly develop information products to meet urgent public sector needs. Some early examples include:

Data Research Service	Test & Protect	Four Harms	Disease Surveillance
• A COVID-19 data research service to provide secure access to data to help provide answers to key analytical and research questions about the nature of spread, risks and effects of COVID-19 • This was launched on **28 May**	• A management information system for 'Test and Protect' • The first statistics from this were published by Public Health Scotland on **10 June**	• A national-level understanding of the COVID-19 four harms	• Disease surveillance dashboards to support national and local decision making and to help the public understand and manage risk • For decision makers this was launched on **6 July**

Getting in touch

As Scotland continues to drive down the number of COVID-19 cases and new challenges arise over the longer term, we will continue to develop a sustainable network that meets the public sector's information needs.

Please **get in touch** via data.intelligencegroup@gov.scot if you:

o are a potential **user of the service** and want provide feedback on the products you would like to see

o are **a data owner** and have data or **data expertise** that you think could be useful and you can share

o need any **further information** about the network