

# COVID-19 update to the Hackney Scrutiny Commission

6 January 2021

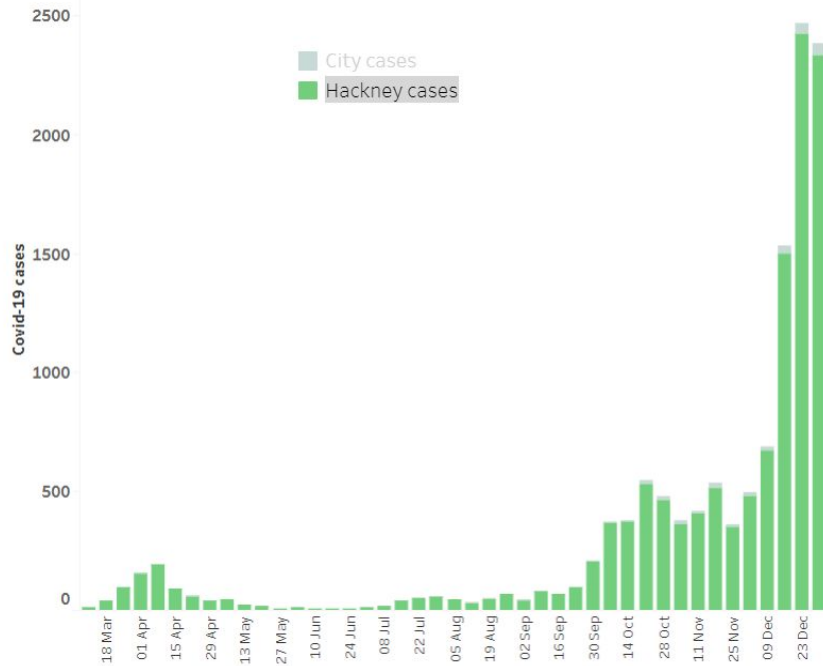
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Director of Public Health  
City and Hackney Public Health

# Key messages

- Due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases, deaths and an increasing pressure on the NHS, a national lockdown has been imposed from 6 January until at least mid-February.
- Hackney COVID-19 incidence rate as well as the test positivity rate has risen sharply throughout December.
- Most worryingly, the rates among the older residents have increased significantly in the past weeks.
- These factors have led to an increase in COVID-related hospital admissions and the critical care at the Homerton Hospital is now at full capacity.
- Testing capacity in Hackney has improved significantly and there is now lateral flow testing as well as the PCR testing available.
- Local contact tracing work continues to improve the overall success rates in reaching COVID-positive residents.
- A new IT system is being developed in order to facilitate case and outbreak management.

# The number of COVID-19 cases in Hackney started to increase from October, in December there was a sharp rise in new cases

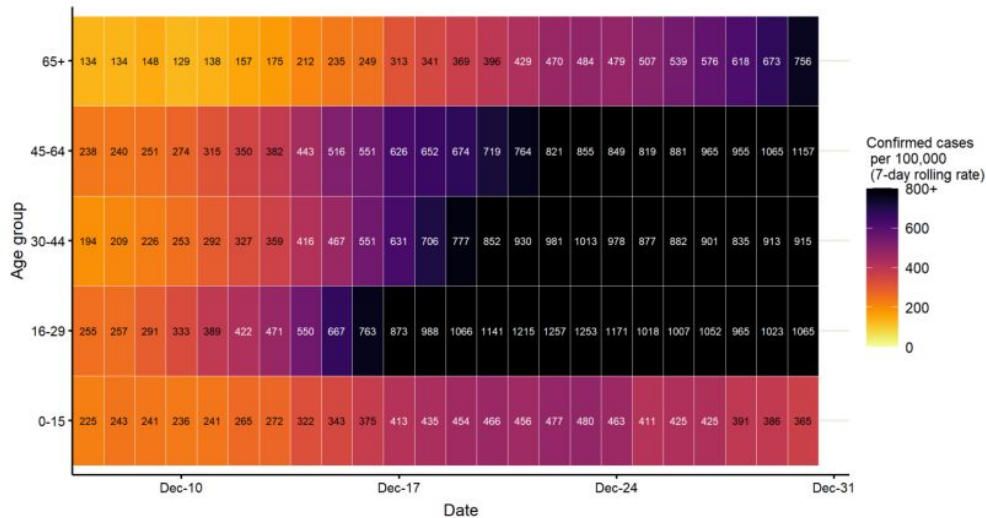
New Hackney COVID-19 cases by week, up to 30 December



- The number of new COVID-19 cases has risen sharply in the past week coinciding with the emergence of the new, more infectious, variant of the virus.
- It is estimated that in London around 70% of all cases can now be attributed to the new variant.
- The test positivity rate has also increased significantly in the last weeks with a current rate of about 25%.
- Hackney incidence rate is now over 800 per 100,000 population which is lower than the overall London rate of around 900 per 100,000.
- The testing rates have been increasing throughout December, but there was a drop of around 50% in testing rates during the Christmas period.
- The current testing rate is around 3,800 per 100,000.

# A sharp increase in incidence rate has been recorded for all age groups in the last month

COVID-19 incidence rate by age in Hackney (7 to 30 December)



- The incidence rates in all age groups have increased significantly compared with the rates at the beginning of December:
  - Under 16: 386 vs. 220 per 100,000 respectively (up 75%)
  - 16-29: 1,023 vs. 250 (up 309%)
  - 30-44: 912 vs. 168 (up 443%)
  - 45-64: 1,065 vs. 229 (up 365%)
  - 65+: 673 vs. 129 per 100,000 respectively (up 422%)
- The increase in rates among the older age groups is worrying as these are our most vulnerable residents.

# Increase in COVID-19 cases has resulted in an increasing number of hospital admissions, NHS staff absences and COVID-19 deaths

Homerton Hospital general and critical COVID-19 bed occupancy and COVID-related staff absences



- Since the beginning of October and up to 18 of December, 36 residents died from COVID-19.
- It is likely that future weeks will bring more deaths in line with the increasing incidence among older residents and the rising number of COVID patients in critical care.
- In the week up to 31 of December, there were 184 COVID-19 patients at the Homerton Hospital with 23 in critical care.
- Critical care beds at Homerton are near full capacity.
- The number of hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 positive patients has been increasing steeply throughout December.

# Overview of testing channels in Hackney

## Aims and Purpose of Testing

**DIAGNOSIS** Confirmation of diagnosis in clinical management (such as in hospitals)

**DETECTION** Identification of cases of COVID-19 for purposes of specific action to prevent viral spread

**SURVEILLANCE** Determine circulating disease levels and inform policy decisions for population health measures

**PILOTING** Asymptomatic testing to: find cases; protect vulnerable people; enable economic/social activity

# Overview of testing channels in Hackney

## Pillar 1 - PCR Tests in PHE, NHS, LAMP Tests

Symptomatic patients  
Symptomatic NHS frontline  
staff and household  
members  
Support outbreak situations  
Asymptomatic patients to  
support resumption of  
elective care, inpatient care  
and discharge planning

## Pillar 2 - PCR Mass Symptomatic Testing and regular testing

Book [online](#) or call 119  
2 Mobile Testing Units  
Hackney Marshes and Egerton  
Road.  
2 MTUs in schools before  
Christmas in collaboration with  
military personnel.  
3 Local Test Stations (LTS') open  
7 days a week from 8am to  
8pm.  
Home Test Kits  
CQC Care Homes and  
Domiciliary Workers  
GP Surgeries and Satellites.

## Pillar 2 - Community Rapid Asymptomatic Testing

The roll out of Lateral Flow Tests  
in schools and smaller pilots in  
settings such as housing for  
people with learning disabilities

1 Rapid Test Centre: 18 Edwards  
Lane, Stoke Newington, open 7  
days a week, 10am to 7pm.

More rapid test centres planned  
prioritising essential workers and  
early years settings

# Areas of future focus - Symptomatic and Asymptomatic Testing



Accessible, timely testing and isolation of **symptomatic cases** makes the largest contribution towards reducing onward transmission. Maximising the accessibility and take up of PCR swab testing remains a key priority. Offering timely and adequate support to those who face financial, medical or psychosocial difficulties in self-isolating.

More work needs to be done to **understand factors associated with testing uptake**, to inform actions focused on maximising symptomatic testing.

Test turnaround times have improved across all channels and must **continue to be optimised**.

Mobilise **asymptomatic Community Testing** across the city, in response to exponential epidemic growth. To deploy scaled up testing of asymptomatic individuals in a way that best suits and responds to the needs of Hackney's communities, to gain insight into where rapid testing supports the end to end process of testing, tracing and isolating - such as for essential workers



# Local Contact Tracing

- The NHS Test and Trace system started operating on the 28 of May. This is supplemented by local contact tracing, which was implemented 22nd September 2020. This is a 7 day service.
- Cases which fail to be contacted by the national team are followed up locally. To date, over **1,500 cases** have been transferred to our local team, and around 43% are successfully completed. This takes the success rate across City and Hackney to around **85% to 90%** most weeks.
- The team consists of EHOs in the City of London, and trained individuals from Hackney customer service centre. The service is overseen by the public health team, and is supported by Public Health England.
- A new IT system ***Here to Help*** is in development to facilitate case and outbreak management which will be shared across the City and Hackney. This system ties together several elements of our Coronavirus response - shielding, welfare, helpline and contact tracing.
- In Hackney, **daily case reviews have been implemented**, with cases assessed jointly by the tracing team, Environmental Health, and Public Health. These identify issues of concern that require follow up.
- We are developing a **training framework** based on experience of contact tracers to date, learning from colleagues in other local authorities, and material from PHE